

WE'LL SOON BE HOME AGAIN



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DARK HORSE BOOKS



**To those who have made me who I am and given
me the opportunity to live and breathe freely.
—JBB**

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Originally published in Sweden by Natur & Kultur, 2018

Published by Dark Horse Books, a division of Dark Horse Comics LLC
10956 SE Main Street Milwaukie, OR 97222

DarkHorse.com
Advertising Sales: (503) 905-2315
Comic Shop Locator Service: Comicshoplocator.com

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bab Bonde, Jessica, author. | Bergting, Peter, artist. | Barbito, Sunshine, translator. | Renta, Kathryn S., letterer.
Title: We'll soon be home again / story, Jessica Bab Bonde ; art, Peter Bergting ; translation, Jessica Bab Bonde & Sunshine Barbito ; letterer, Kathryn Renta.
Other titles: Vi kommer snart hem igen. English | We will soon be home again
Description: Milwaukie, OR : Dark Horse Books, 2020. | Audience: Ages 12+ | Audience: Grades 7-9 | Summary: Based on interviews with six Holocaust survivors, these first-person point of view stories relate living through the de-humanization and starvation in concentration camps and the industrial-scale mass murder in extermination camps.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019043599 (print) | LCCN 2019043600 (ebook) | ISBN 9781506715490 (paperback) | ISBN 9781506715667 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Graphic novels. | CYAC: Graphic novels. | Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Fiction. | Survival--Fiction.
Classification: LCC PZ7.7.B157 We 2020 (print) | LCC PZ7.7.B157 (ebook) | DDC 741.5/9485--dc23
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019043599>
LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019043600>

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FOREWORD

Tobias, Livia, Selma, Susanna, Emerich, and Elisabeth. Their lives started just like mine or yours. It's possible they were even more lucky than you are. They were all born into safety and comfort with family and friends around. They had homes, they had food and clothes. They had the same thoughts and troubles that all children do. They had freedom and were able to grow, play with friends, and some of them would start school, others would even start university. Not any happier or any sadder than other children. They lived just like you and I do.

Then, suddenly, their lives started to change. For some, the change was slow. So slow that they hardly noticed it. They weren't allowed on certain streets, couldn't play with children in the parks, and maybe had to quit school. For some, it all happened overnight. They were forced to move to other parts of their cities and to live squeezed in together with people they didn't know. They couldn't work or go to school. They had no money and hardly any food. Soon, all joy, comfort, and everyday life was taken from them. Soon there was only fear and fighting for their lives.

All of them lost parents, siblings, best friends, homes, clothes, favorite things. More or less, their whole lives. How could that happen? Could that happen to us? To you and me?

While all of this happened, life went on like usual for many people, as though nothing had happened at all. Some of them would protest. They'd speak out about what they found strange or wrong. For example, that their friends, colleagues, and classmates were no longer allowed to work or study simply because they were Jewish. Simply because, in one way or another, they deviated from what the rulers claimed was "normal." But there weren't enough who took a stand. Too many didn't care, too many did not sympathize with the ones being exposed. Too many looked the other way and were happy as long as nothing happened to them or their families.

I believe that these things can happen to us, to you and me and to our families. In other places around the world, but also here in our country. Unfortunately, I believe it could happen easily. It can happen when we stop caring about how we treat each other, about what's okay and what's not okay to do.

Tobias, Livia, Selma, Susanna, Emerich, and Elisabeth have told us about their lives, so that you will get the chance to understand what can happen if we are not careful with the freedom that we have today. We cannot take the right to live freely for granted. If we are to think

freely as we choose to, we must also let others think and believe as they want to. Sometimes it's difficult to accept that another's beliefs may be different from ours, even challenging to ours. But we must live side by side. Sometimes that might seem like a bad idea. But to coexist peacefully is much better than having someone take your freedoms away, to violate your human rights, because of your own beliefs. You and me and our friends, we are all responsible for our world, and how we want it to be. We have to share that responsibility. Together.

Jessica Brubaker

Stockholm, Sweden

October 2017



GHETTO | LODZ

Europe during
World War II,
1939 borders



MY MOTHER'S
NAME WAS ESTER.

MUM AND DAD HAD A
GROCERY STORE IN LODZ.
THE STORE WAS ALL WE HAD.

Tobias

IN THE SUMMERS, MY MUM
AND I WOULD GO UP TO THE
MOUNTAINS, TO ZAKOPANE.

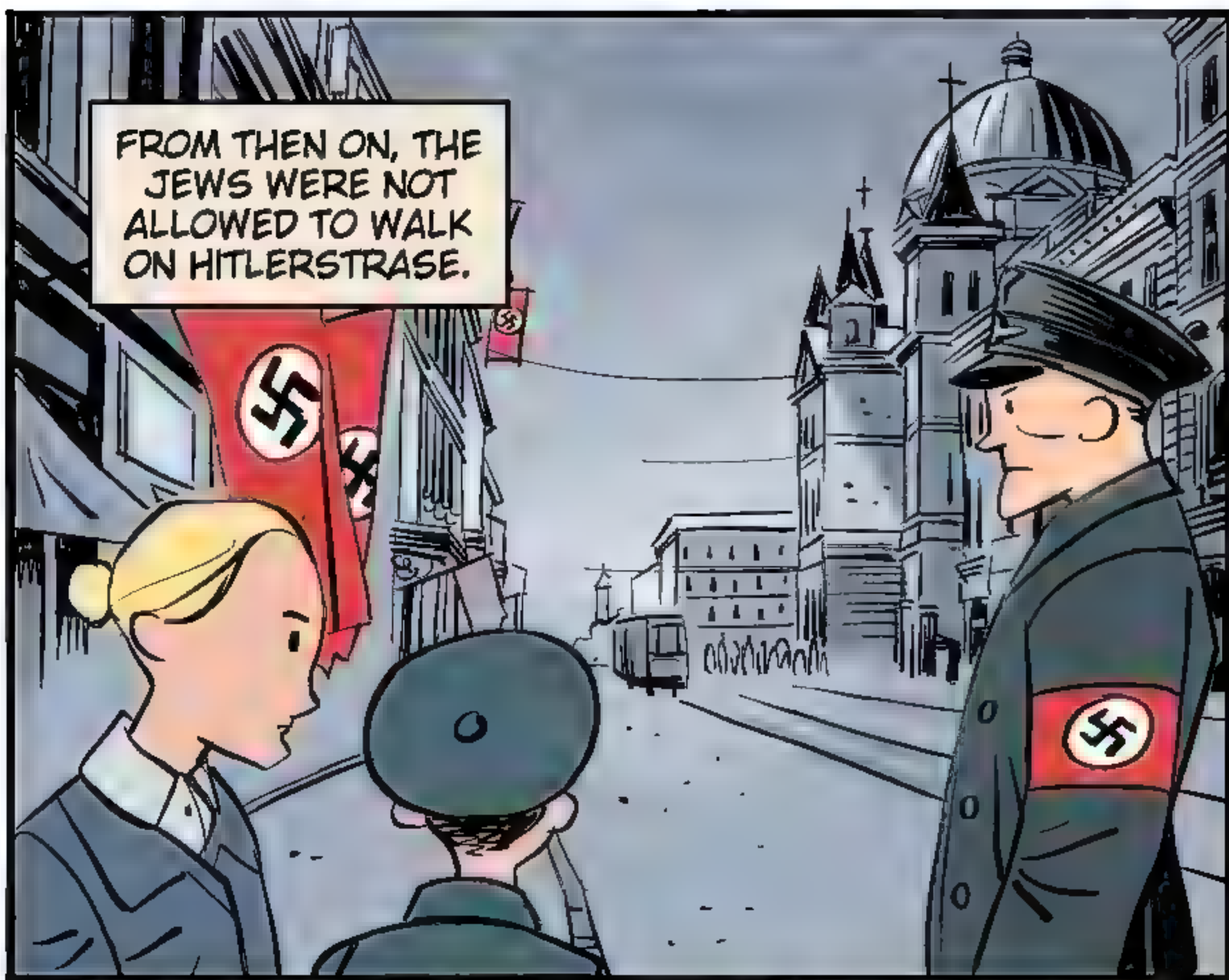
RAWET

IN ZAKOPANE, THERE WAS
FRESH AIR AND WE COULD
REST. WHILE WE WERE
GONE, DAD TOOK CARE OF
THE STORE.

IN THE AUTUMN OF
1939, LODZ BECAME
A GERMAN CITY.

THE MAIN STREET'S
NAME CHANGED TO
HITLERSTRASE. THE
GERMANS THOUGHT THAT
ALL JEWS IN LODZ SHOULD
LIVE IN THE SAME AREA.

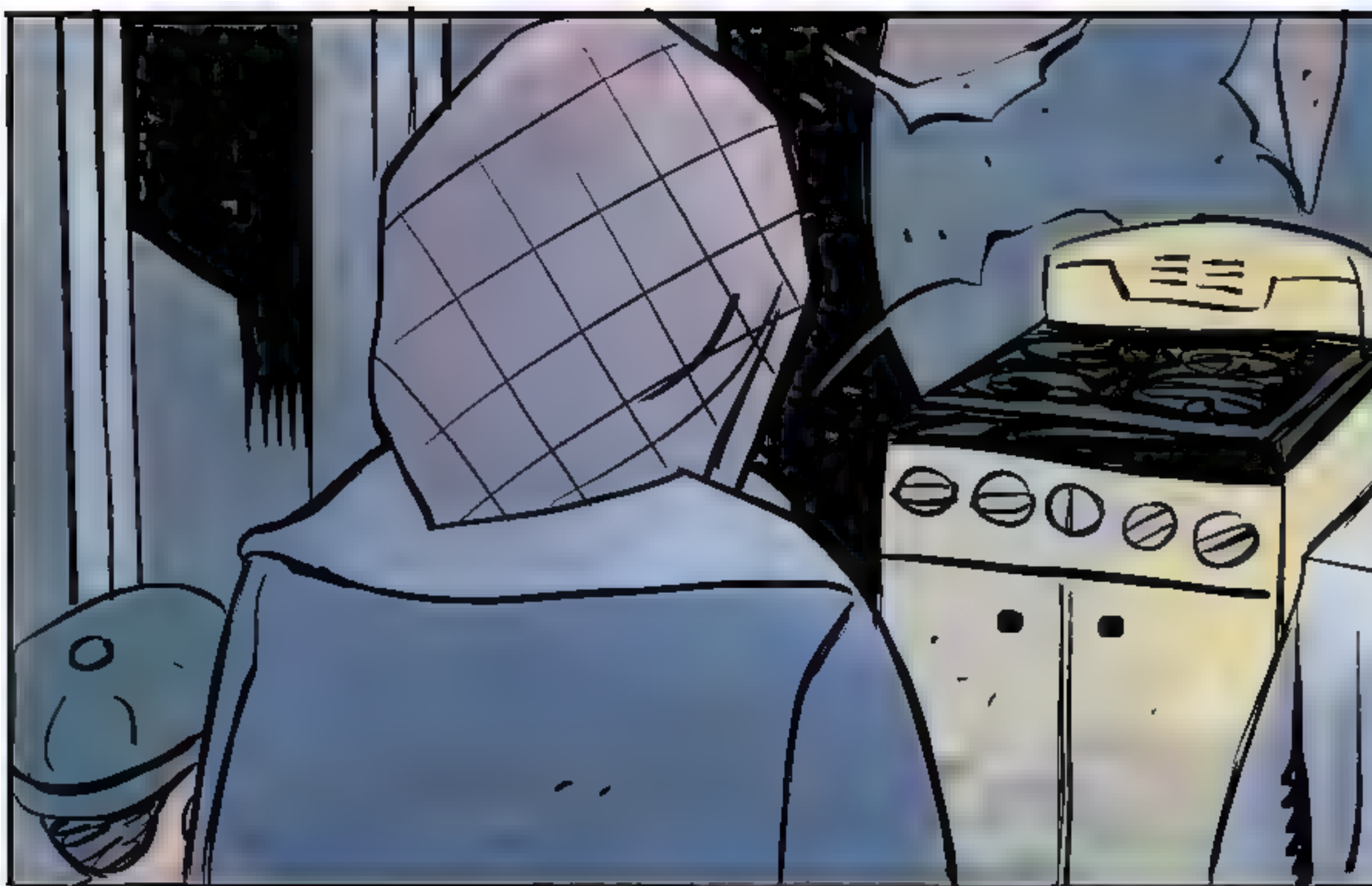
THAT AREA WAS
CALLED THE GHETTO.



FROM THEN ON, THE
JEWS WERE NOT
ALLOWED TO WALK
ON HITLERSTRASE.



MY FAMILY WAS FORCED
TO MOVE INTO AN OLD
THREE-BEDROOM
APARTMENT IN THE GHETTO.



MUM, DAD, AND I STAYED
IN THE LIVING ROOM. MY
FATHER'S MOTHER STAYED
IN A SCRUB CORNER, AND
MY DAD'S TWO BROTHERS
SHARED ONE ROOM.



IN THE GHETTO, MANY
ORPHANS LIVED ON THE
STREET. THEIR PARENTS HAD
BEEN TAKEN IN DIFFERENT
RAIDS. ONE DAY, THEY NEVER
CAME HOME FROM WORK.

SOON THERE WERE
MORE AND MORE OF
THEM. I REMEMBER
THEIR GREY CHEEKS,
AND THEIR EYES
SUNKEN INTO THEIR
FACES.

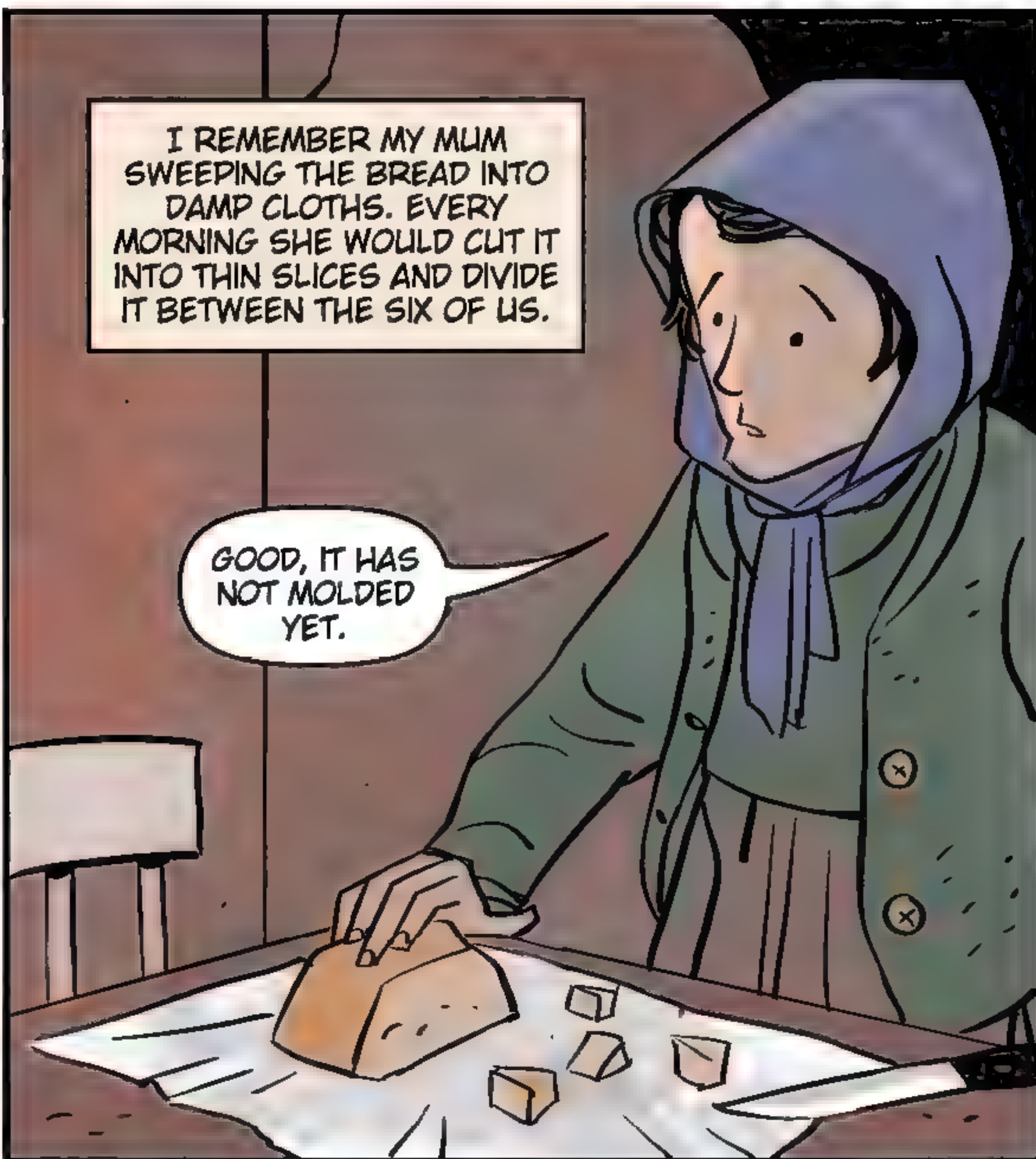


AS TIME PASSED, THEY
ALL DISAPPEARED,
ONE BY ONE.



EVERY TENTH DAY WE FETCHED OUR BREAD RATION.

IS THIS *ALL* WE GET? HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LIVE ON THIS?



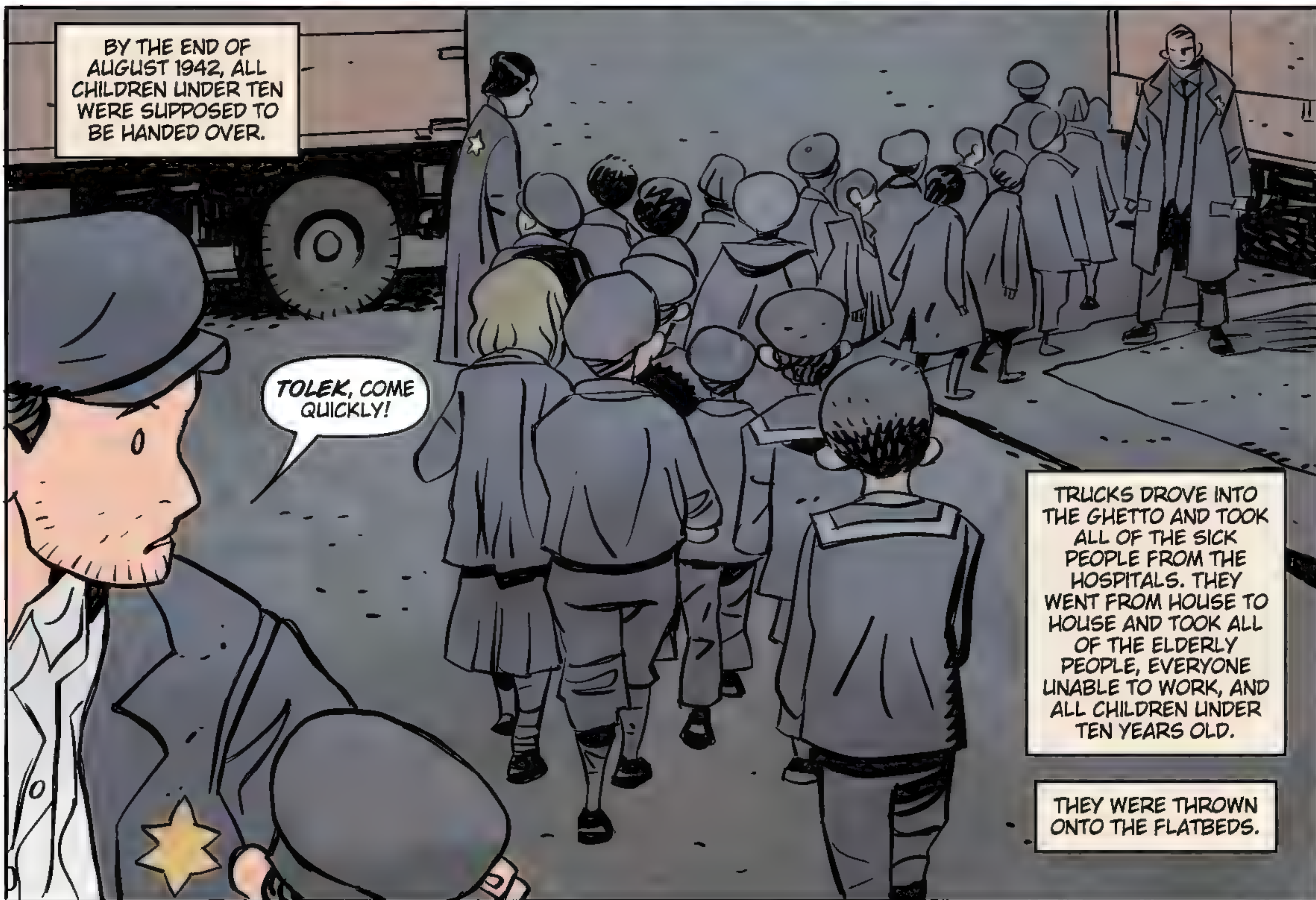
I REMEMBER MY MUM SWEEPING THE BREAD INTO DAMP CLOTHS. EVERY MORNING SHE WOULD CUT IT INTO THIN SLICES AND DIVIDE IT BETWEEN THE SIX OF US.

GOOD, IT HAS NOT MOLDED YET.



MY GRANDMOTHER DIED FROM MALNUTRITION DURING PASSOVER.

MY GRANDMOTHER WAS LUCKY. SHE GOT TO DIE WHEN ALL OF US WERE STILL TOGETHER.



BY THE END OF AUGUST 1942, ALL CHILDREN UNDER TEN WERE SUPPOSED TO BE HANDED OVER.

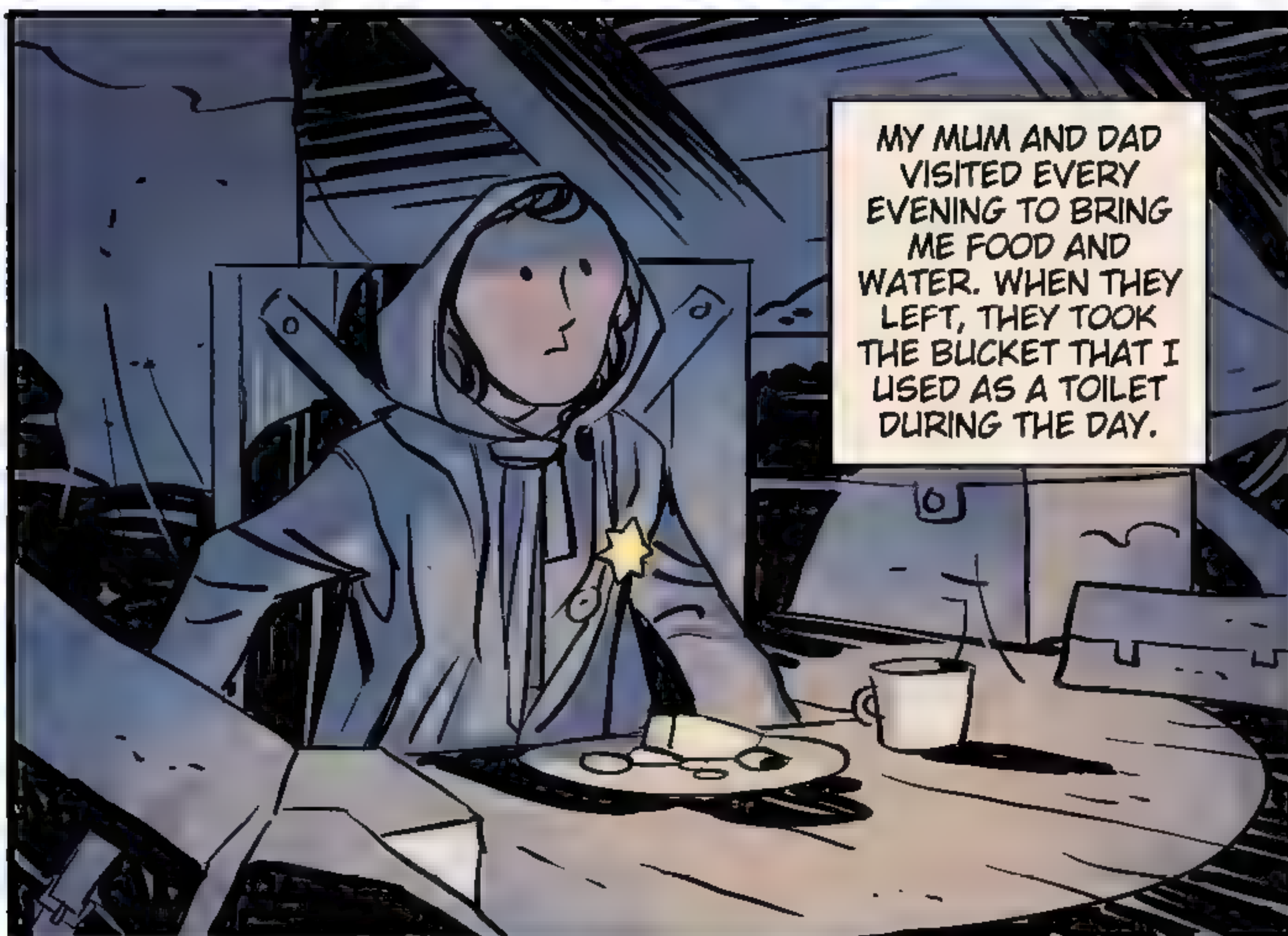
TOLEK, COME QUICKLY!

TRUCKS DROVE INTO THE GHETTO AND TOOK ALL OF THE SICK PEOPLE FROM THE HOSPITALS. THEY WENT FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE AND TOOK ALL OF THE ELDERLY PEOPLE, EVERYONE UNABLE TO WORK, AND ALL CHILDREN UNDER TEN YEARS OLD.

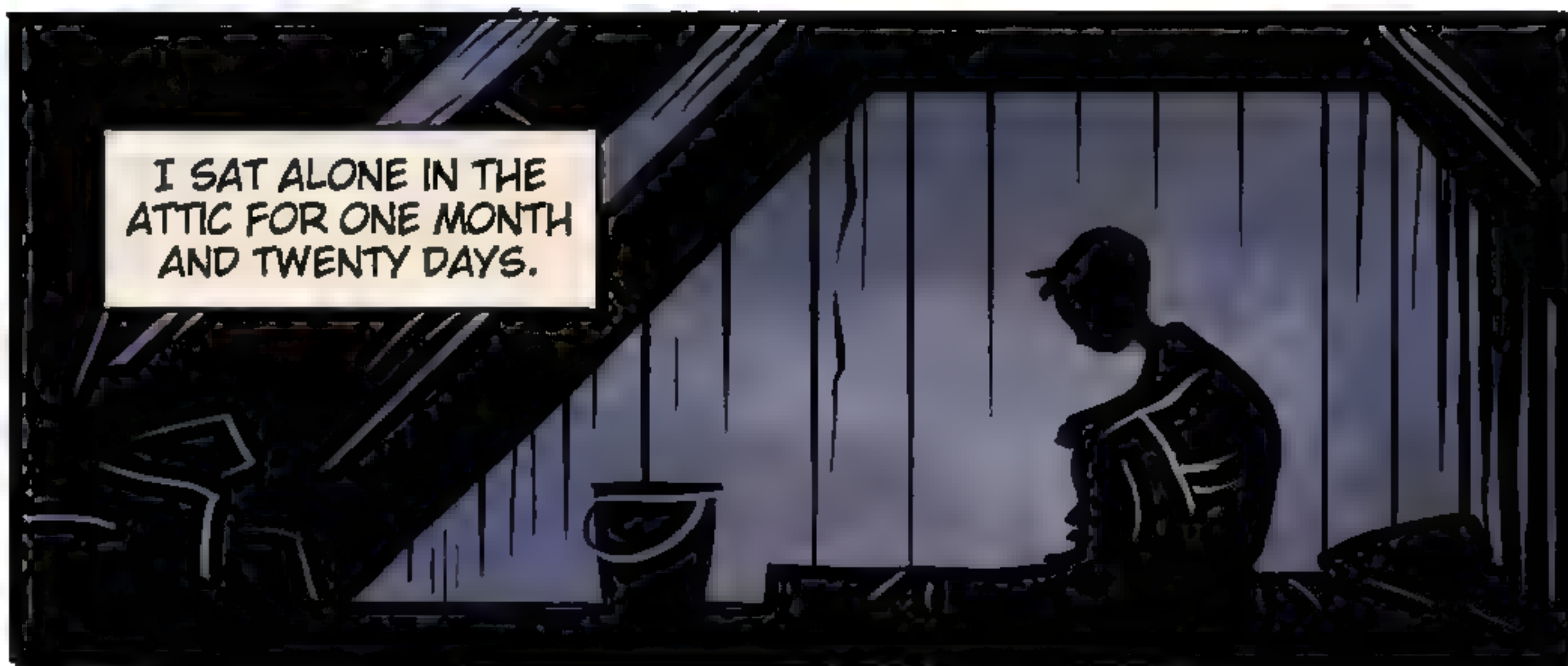
THEY WERE THROWN ONTO THE FLATBEDS.



TOLEK, SIT ON THE MATTRESS. YOU CAN LAY DOWN, STAND UP, OR SIT. BUT YOU CANNOT LEAVE THE MATTRESS, AND YOU **CANNOT** MAKE ANY NOISE.



MY MUM AND DAD VISITED EVERY EVENING TO BRING ME FOOD AND WATER. WHEN THEY LEFT, THEY TOOK THE BUCKET THAT I USED AS A TOILET DURING THE DAY.

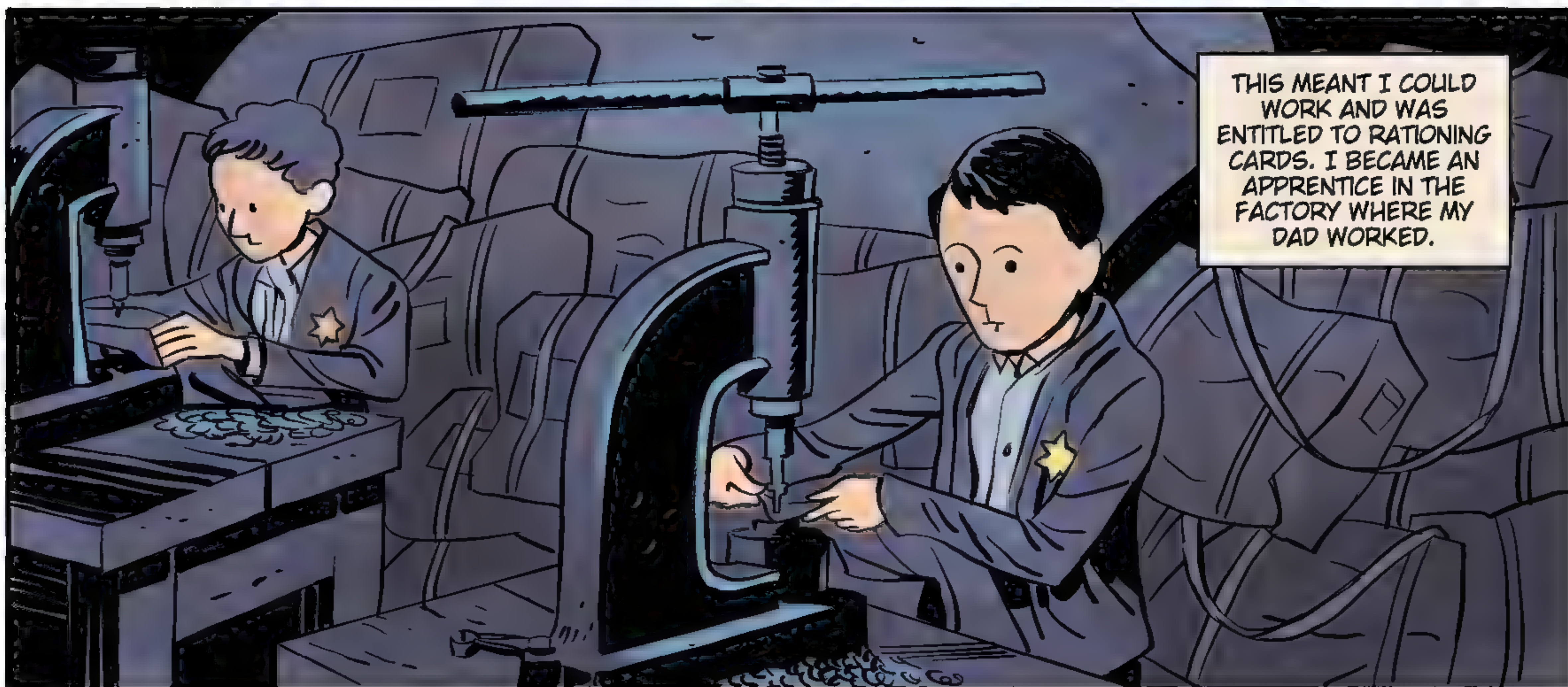


I SAT ALONE IN THE ATTIC FOR ONE MONTH AND TWENTY DAYS.



ONE DAY MUM AND DAD TOLD ME I COULD COME BACK DOWN WITH THEM.

I WAS ACTUALLY SIX YEARS OLD, BUT MY PARENTS HAD ARRANGED PAPERS FOR ME CLAIMING THAT I WAS TEN.



THIS MEANT I COULD WORK AND WAS ENTITLED TO RATIONING CARDS. I BECAME AN APPRENTICE IN THE FACTORY WHERE MY DAD WORKED.

I WAS ALIVE. I HAD
SURVIVED. I WAS
WORKING IN THE
GHETTO.

TRANSPORT AFTER
TRANSPORT LEFT, MOSTLY
FOR AUSCHWITZ. BUT NO
ONE HAD A CLUE WHAT
WAS GOING ON THERE.

ONE CHILD IN ONE
THOUSAND SURVIVED THE
GHETTO IN LODZ AND THE
TIME THEREAFTER. I WAS
ONE OF THE CHILDREN
THAT SURVIVED.

I OFTEN
THINK OF HOW
LUCKY I AM.





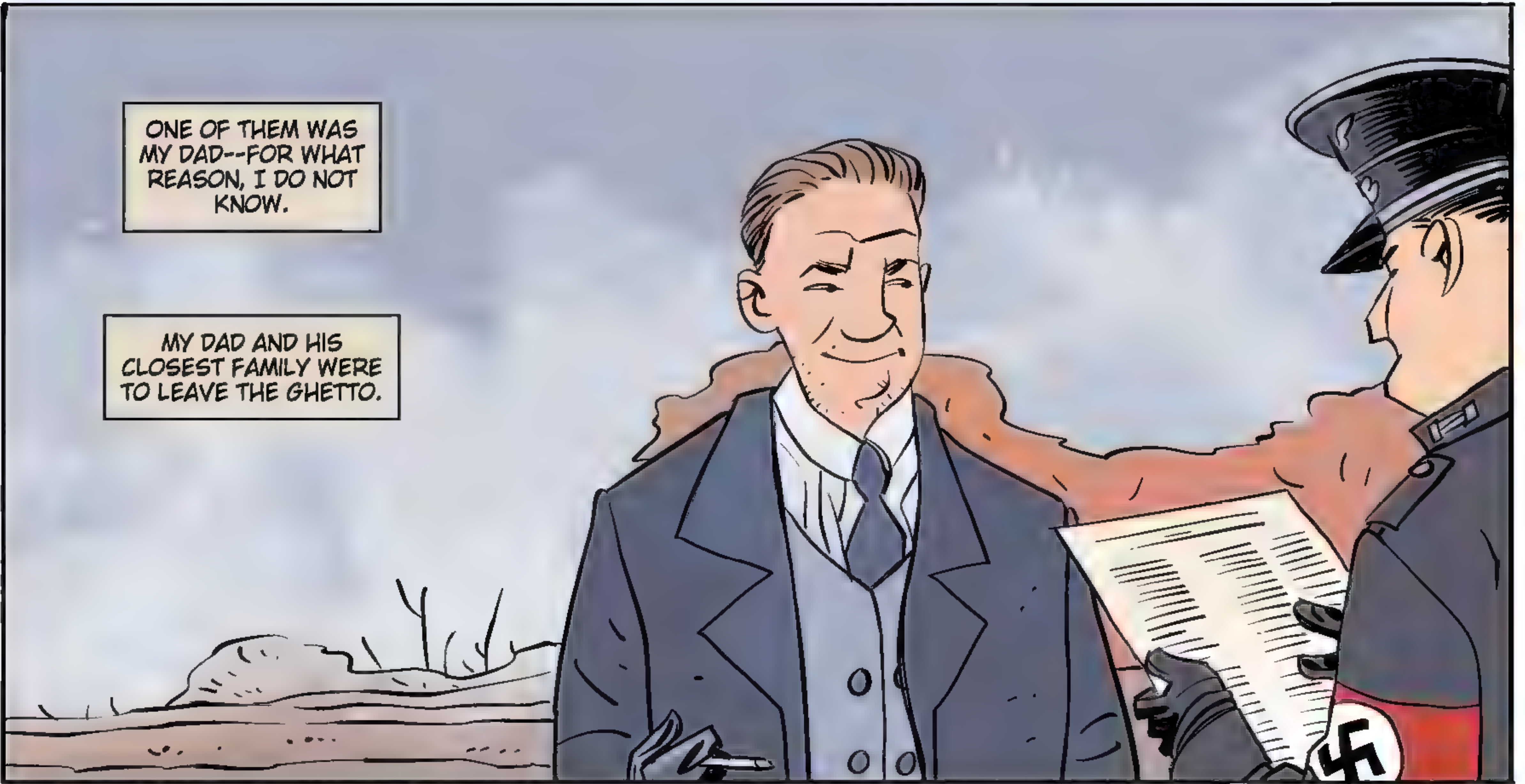
IN THE GHETTO, THERE WAS AN OFFICER. FRANZ SEIFFERT. BY THE AUTUMN OF 1944, HE REALIZED THAT THE GERMANS WERE LOSING THE WAR ...

...AND HE WANTED TO GET AWAY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



HE CREATED A PROJECT TO TAKE HIM OUT OF THE GHETTO. AND US, TOO, AS IT WOULD TURN OUT.

HE WOULD HELP TO REBUILD WAR-DAMAGED GERMANY. FOR THIS HE NEEDED THREE HUNDRED PRISONERS, WHICH HE HIMSELF PICKED OUT.



ONE OF THEM WAS MY DAD--FOR WHAT REASON, I DO NOT KNOW.

MY DAD AND HIS CLOSEST FAMILY WERE TO LEAVE THE GHETTO.

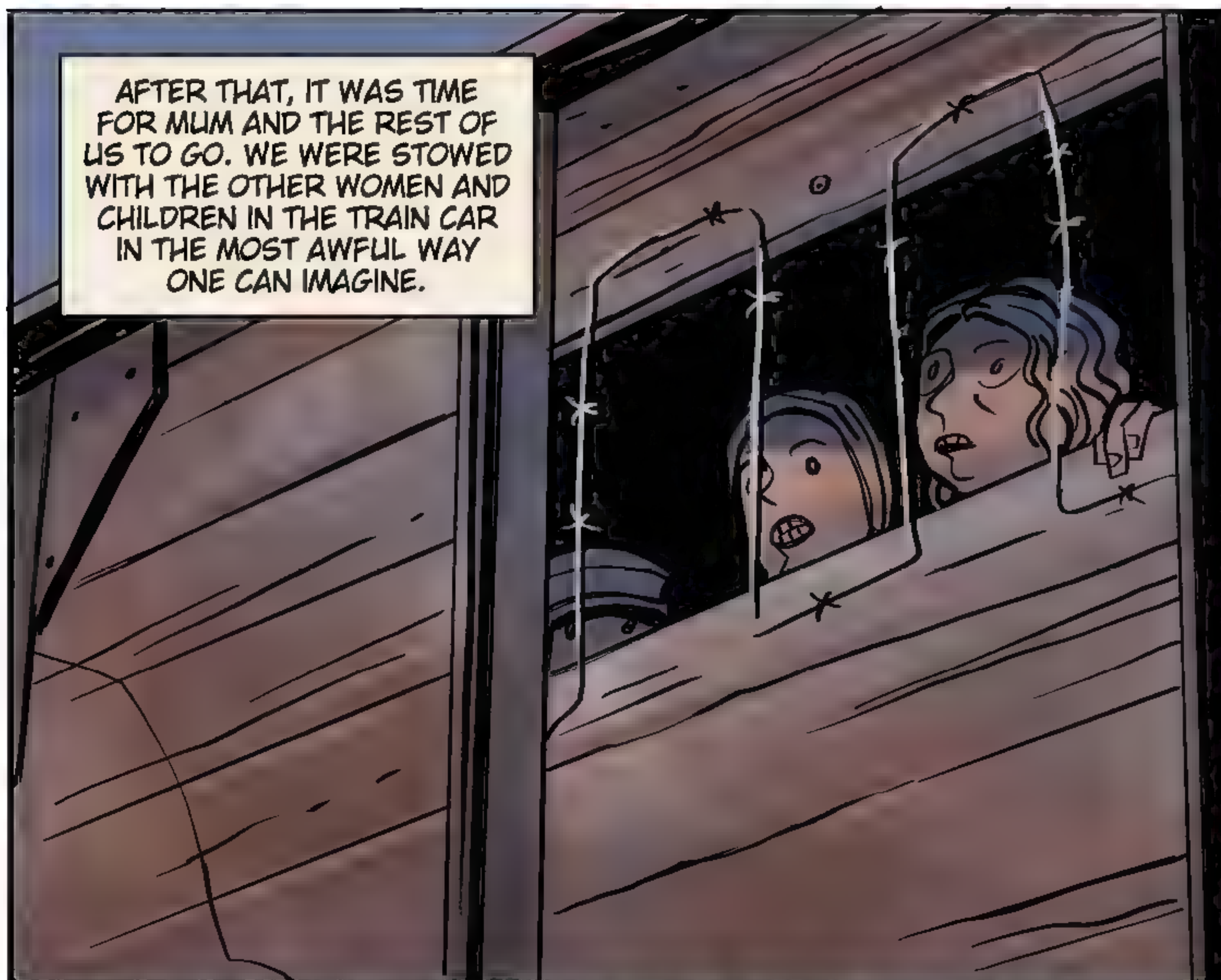


BY THE END
OF OCTOBER,
IT WAS TIME.

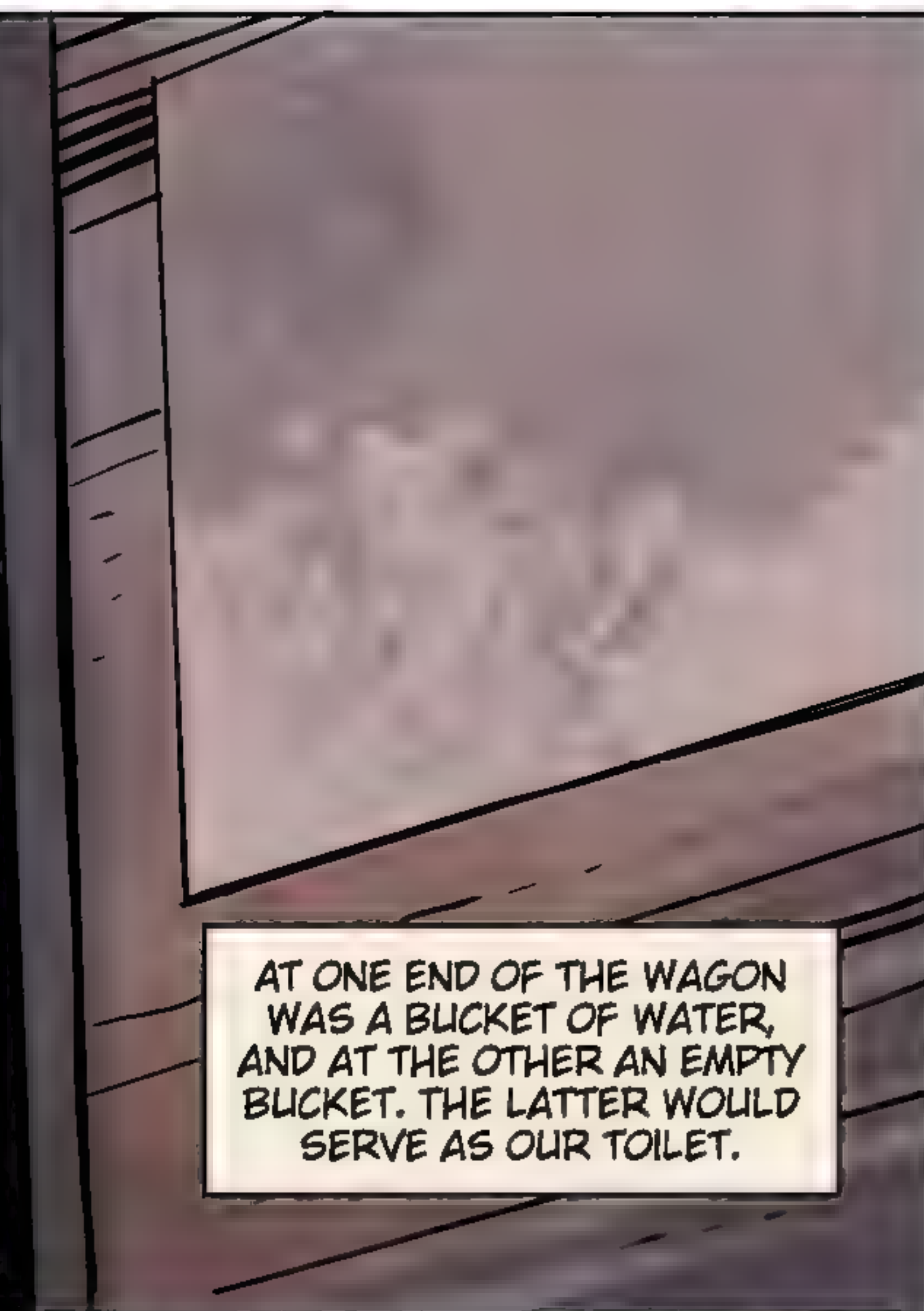
I REMEMBER THE
TWO TRAINS WAITING
AT THE STATION.



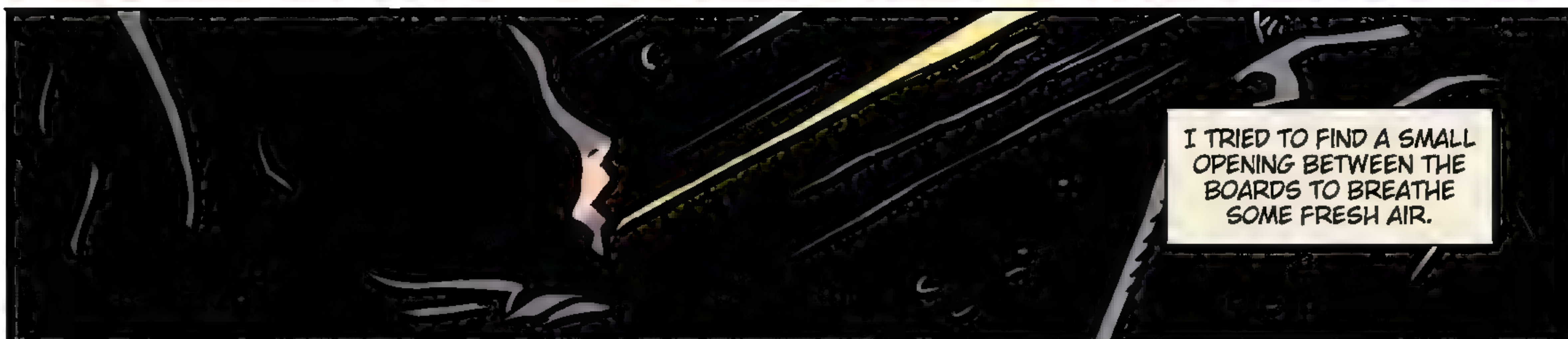
MY DAD AND THE OTHER
PRISONERS GOT ON ONE
TRAIN. WHEN ALL THREE
HUNDRED HAD EMBARKED,
THE TRAIN LEFT THE STATION.



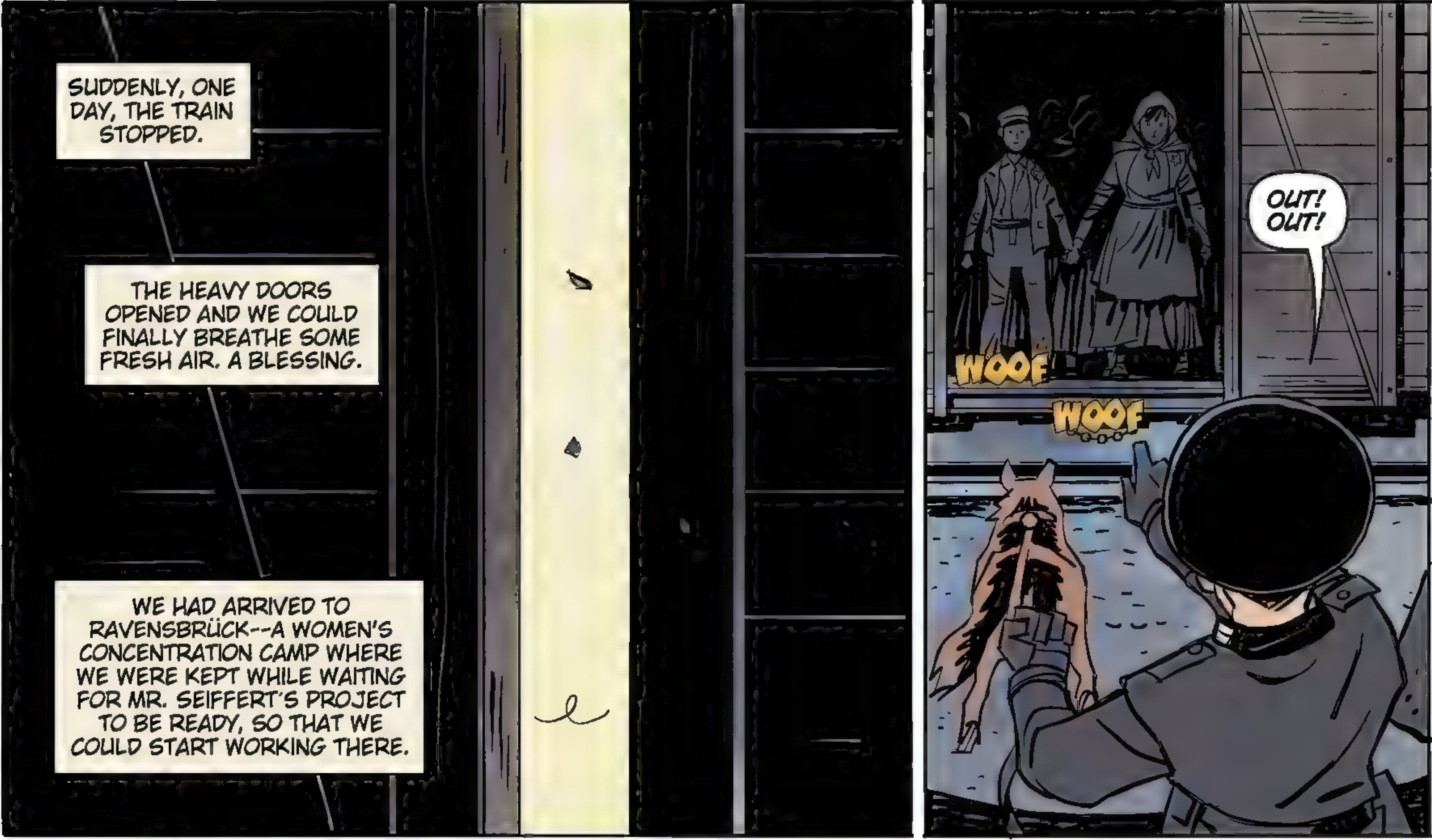
AFTER THAT, IT WAS TIME
FOR MUM AND THE REST OF
US TO GO. WE WERE STOWED
WITH THE OTHER WOMEN AND
CHILDREN IN THE TRAIN CAR
IN THE MOST AWFUL WAY
ONE CAN IMAGINE.



AT ONE END OF THE WAGON
WAS A BUCKET OF WATER,
AND AT THE OTHER AN EMPTY
BUCKET. THE LATTER WOULD
SERVE AS OUR TOILET.



I TRIED TO FIND A SMALL
OPENING BETWEEN THE
BOARDS TO BREATHE
SOME FRESH AIR.





WE WERE
TRANSFORMED
INTO SOMETHING
ELSE. SOMETHING
FAR FROM HUMAN.

SOMETHING
EASIER TO
MURDER.



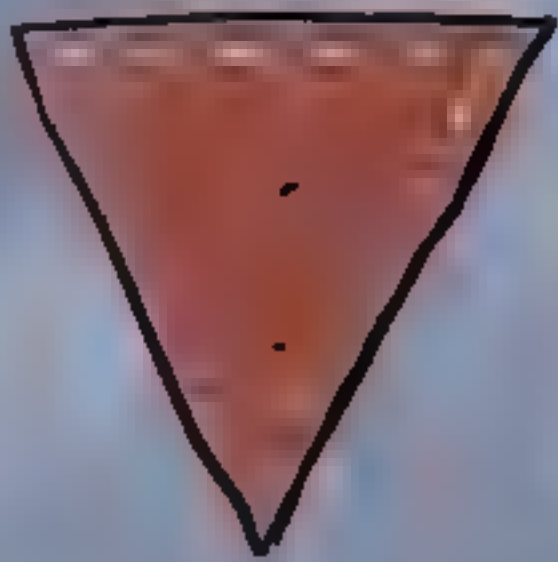
WE WERE
EACH GIVEN
A NUMBER.

I WAS NO LONGER
A HUMAN BEING.
I WAS A NUMBER.

79295.

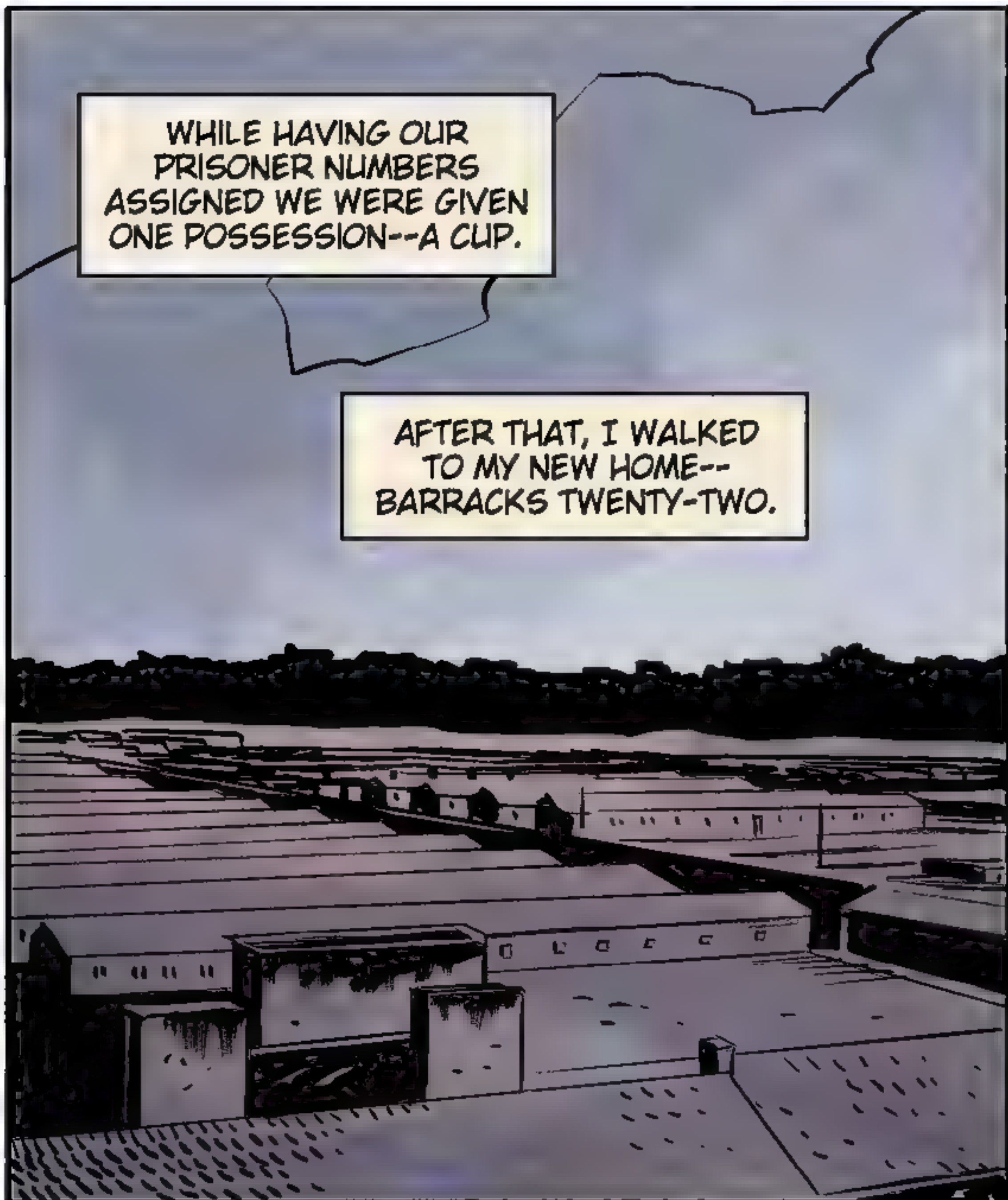


RAVENSBRÜCK COULD
"HOUSE" THIRTY
THOUSAND PEOPLE.



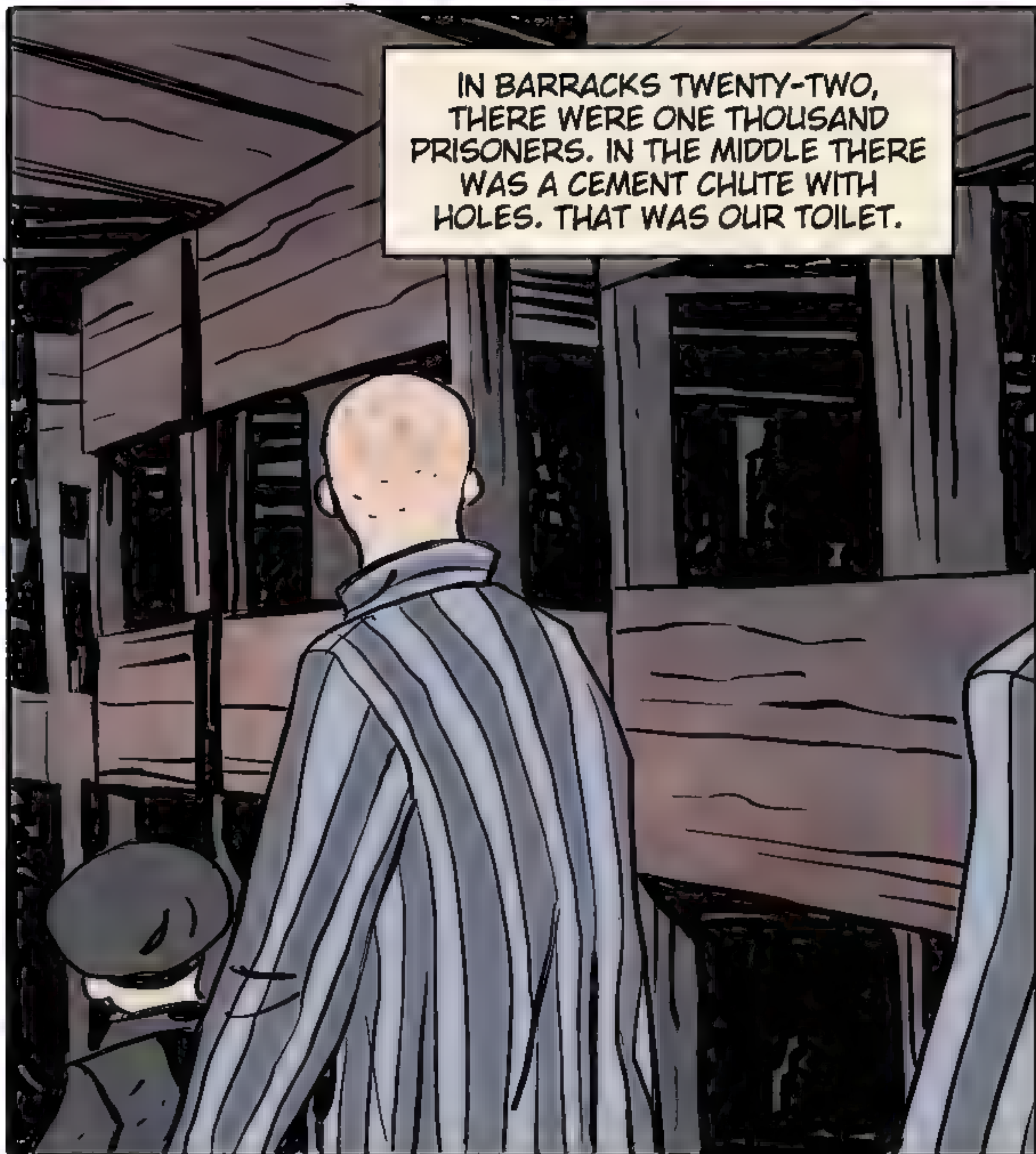
79295

WHERE WERE ALL
THE OTHERS, THE
ONES BEFORE ME?



WHILE HAVING OUR
PRISONER NUMBERS
ASSIGNED WE WERE GIVEN
ONE POSSESSION--A CUP.

AFTER THAT, I WALKED
TO MY NEW HOME--
BARRACKS TWENTY-TWO.



IN BARRACKS TWENTY-TWO,
THERE WERE ONE THOUSAND
PRISONERS. IN THE MIDDLE THERE
WAS A CEMENT CHUTE WITH
HOLES. THAT WAS OUR TOILET.

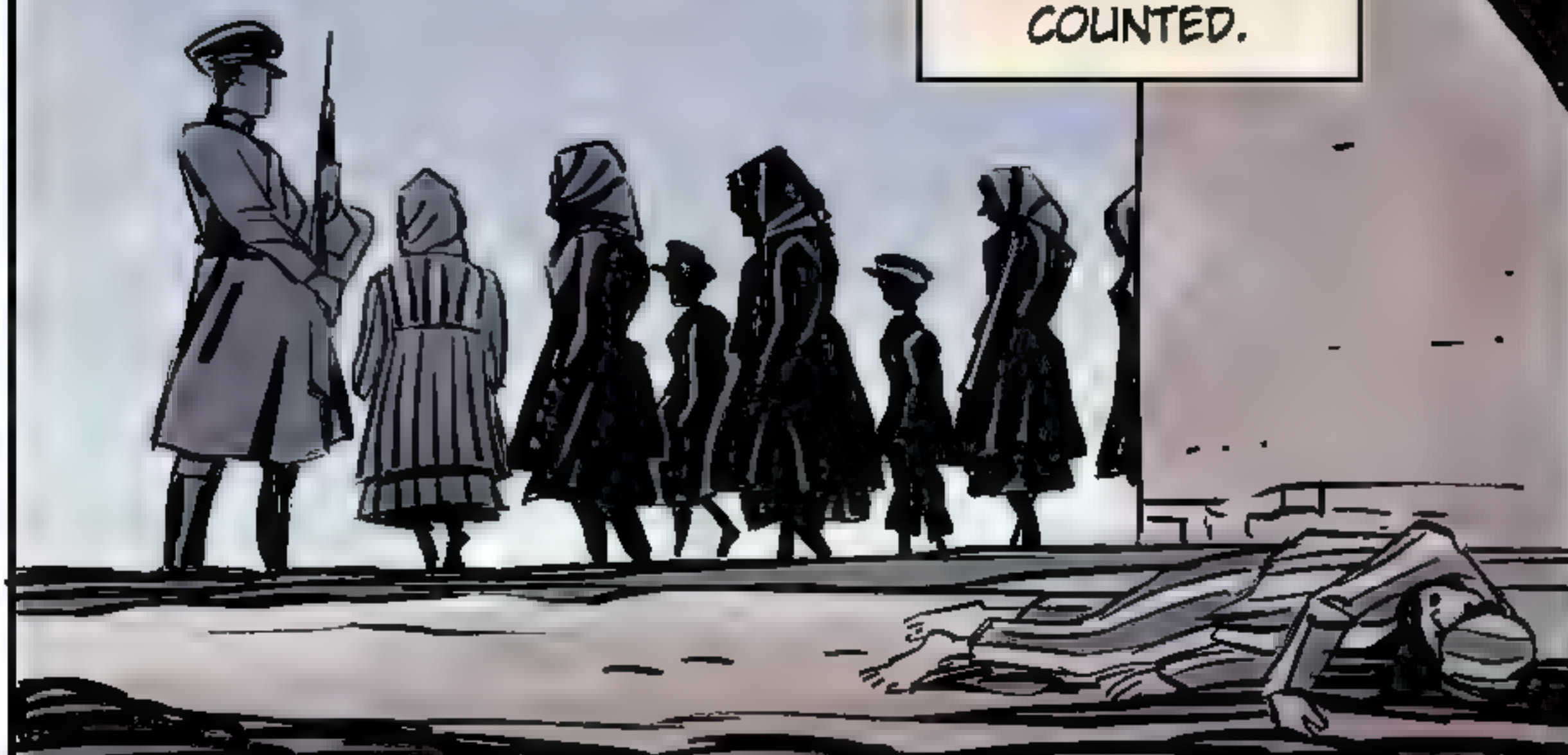
MUM AND I GOT A BED ON TOP. WE HAD TO CLIMB THE POST OF THE BED TO GET UP.

WE HAD TO SLEEP FEET TO FEET WITH ANOTHER BOY AND HIS MUM.

IN THE MORNING, COFFEE WAS HANDED OUT--LUKEWARM WATER WITH BARK.



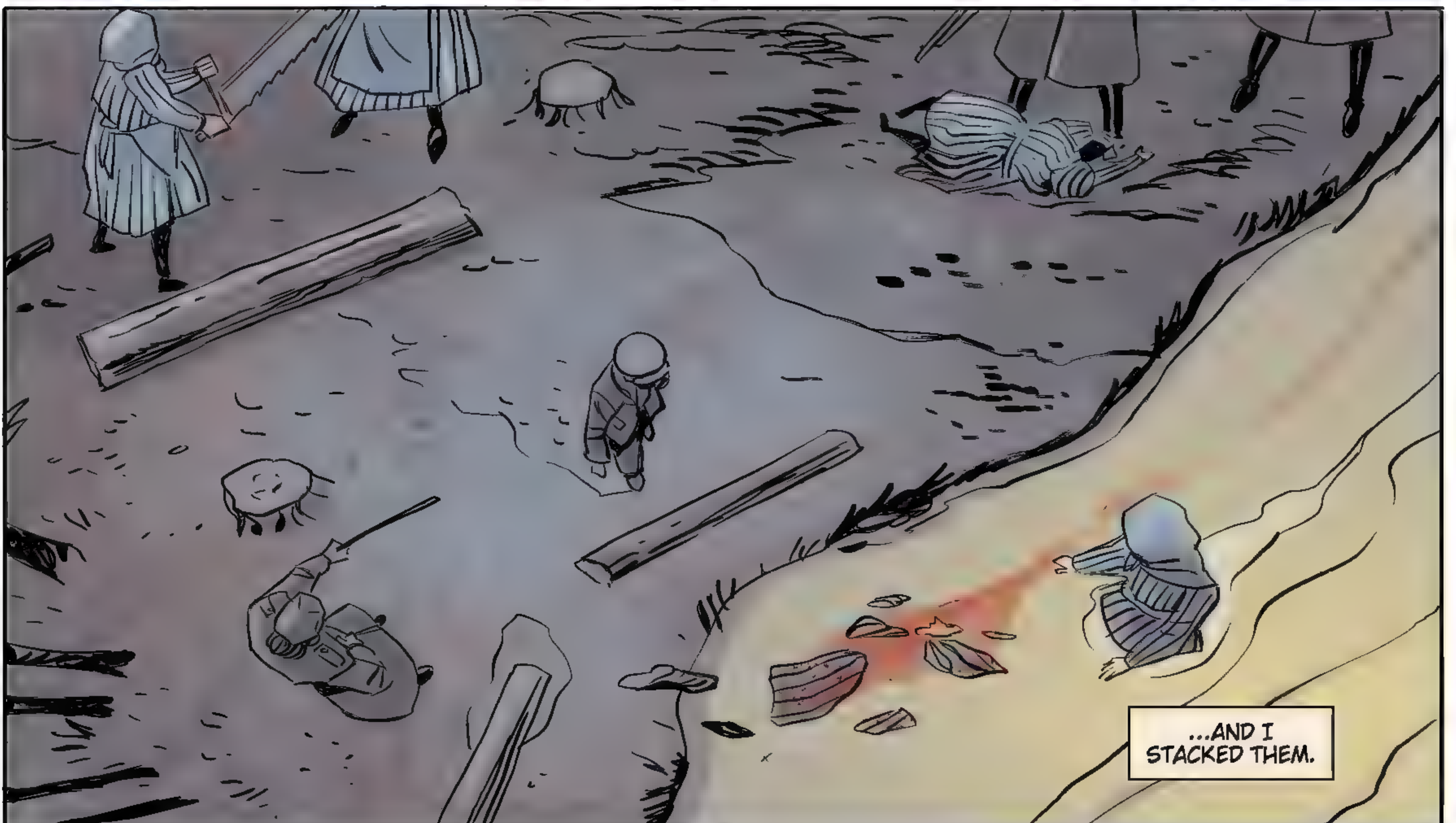
AFTER THAT, WE STOOD OUTSIDE WAITING TO BE COUNTED.



IT WAS NEVER THE SAME AS THE DAY BEFORE.

AT SIX O'CLOCK, WHEN THE COUNTING WAS DONE, THE DOORS TO OUR BARRACKS WERE LOCKED.

WE WENT TO WORK. ME AND MY MUM WORKED OUT IN THE WOODS.



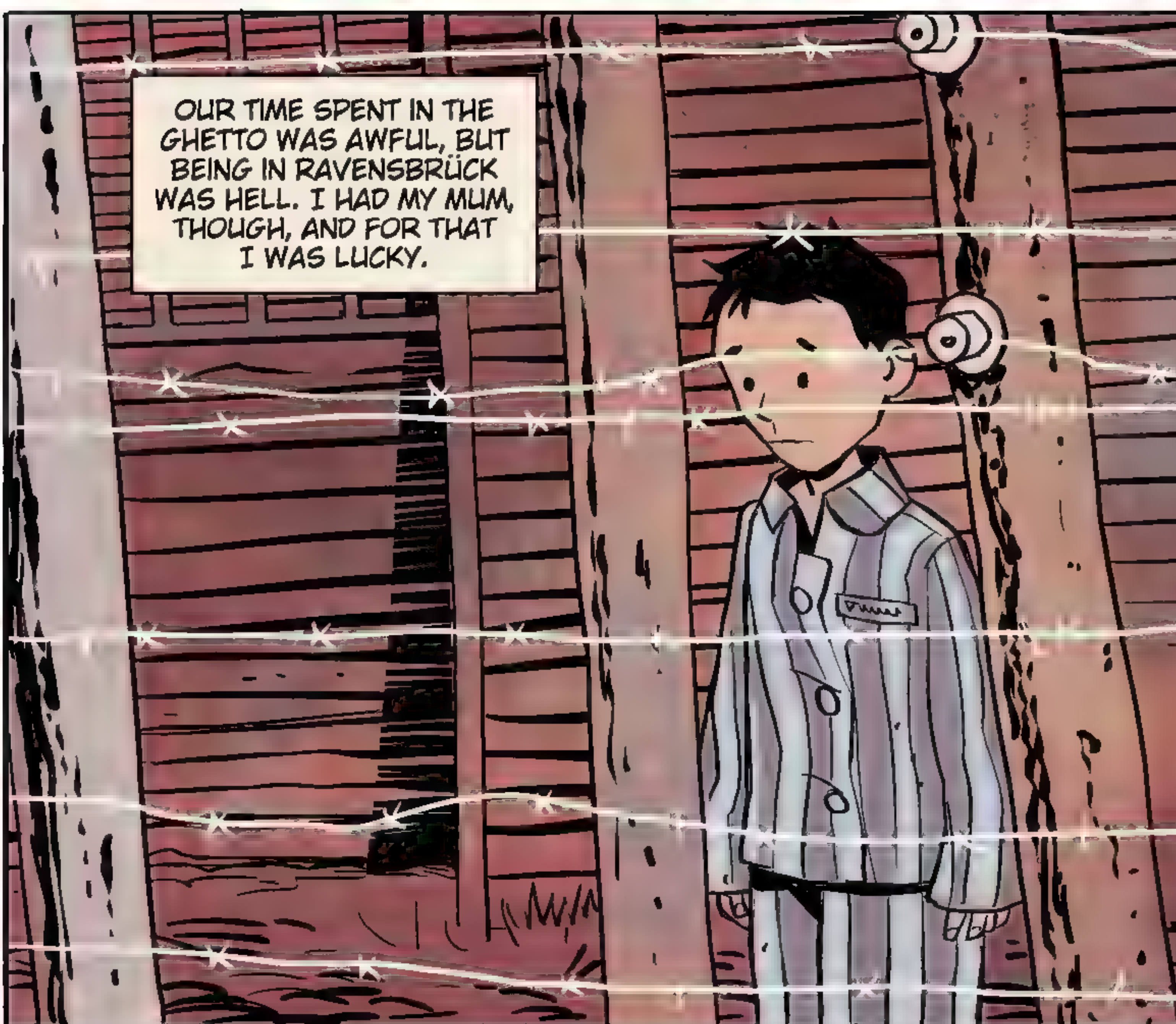
FOR LUNCH WE HAD A PIECE OF SAUSAGE AND SOME SOUP MADE OF WATER AND POTATO SKIN.



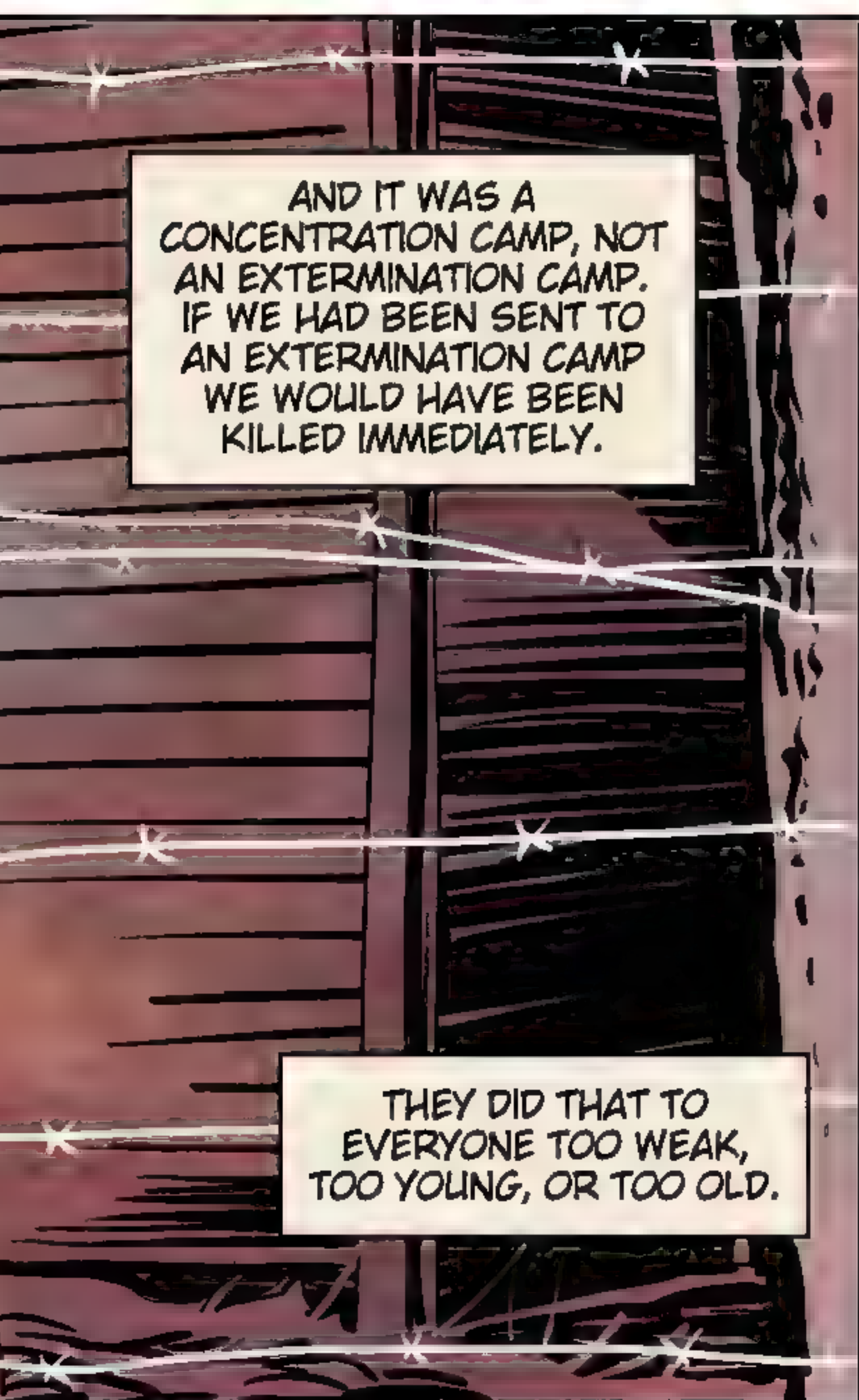
EVERY DAY MY MUM GAVE ME HER PIECE OF SAUSAGE. SHE WANTED ME TO SURVIVE.



OUR TIME SPENT IN THE GHETTO WAS AWFUL, BUT BEING IN RAVENSBRÜCK WAS HELL. I HAD MY MUM, THOUGH, AND FOR THAT I WAS LUCKY.



AND IT WAS A CONCENTRATION CAMP, NOT AN EXTERMINATION CAMP. IF WE HAD BEEN SENT TO AN EXTERMINATION CAMP WE WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED IMMEDIATELY.

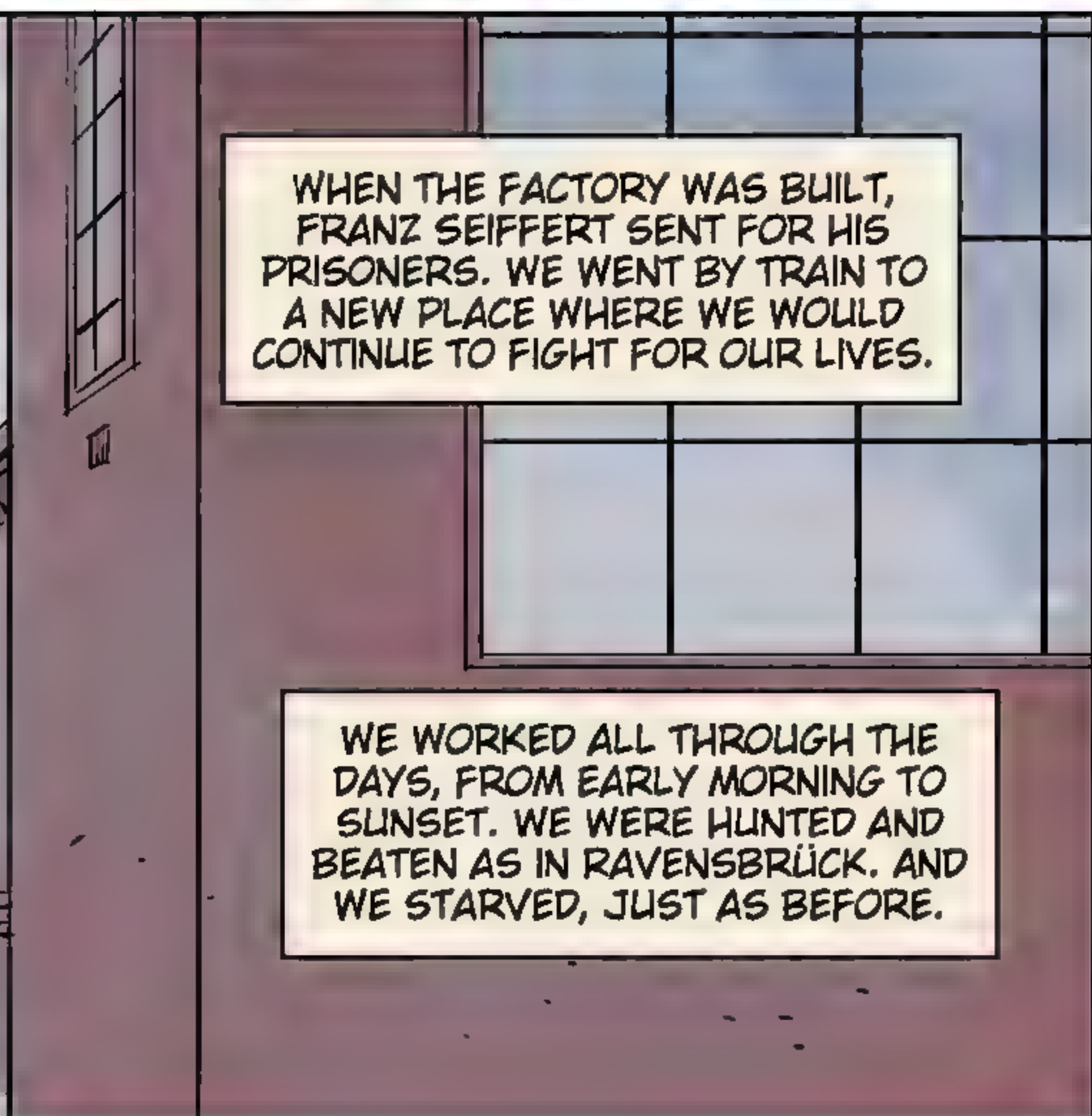


THEY DID THAT TO EVERYONE TOO WEAK, TOO YOUNG, OR TOO OLD.

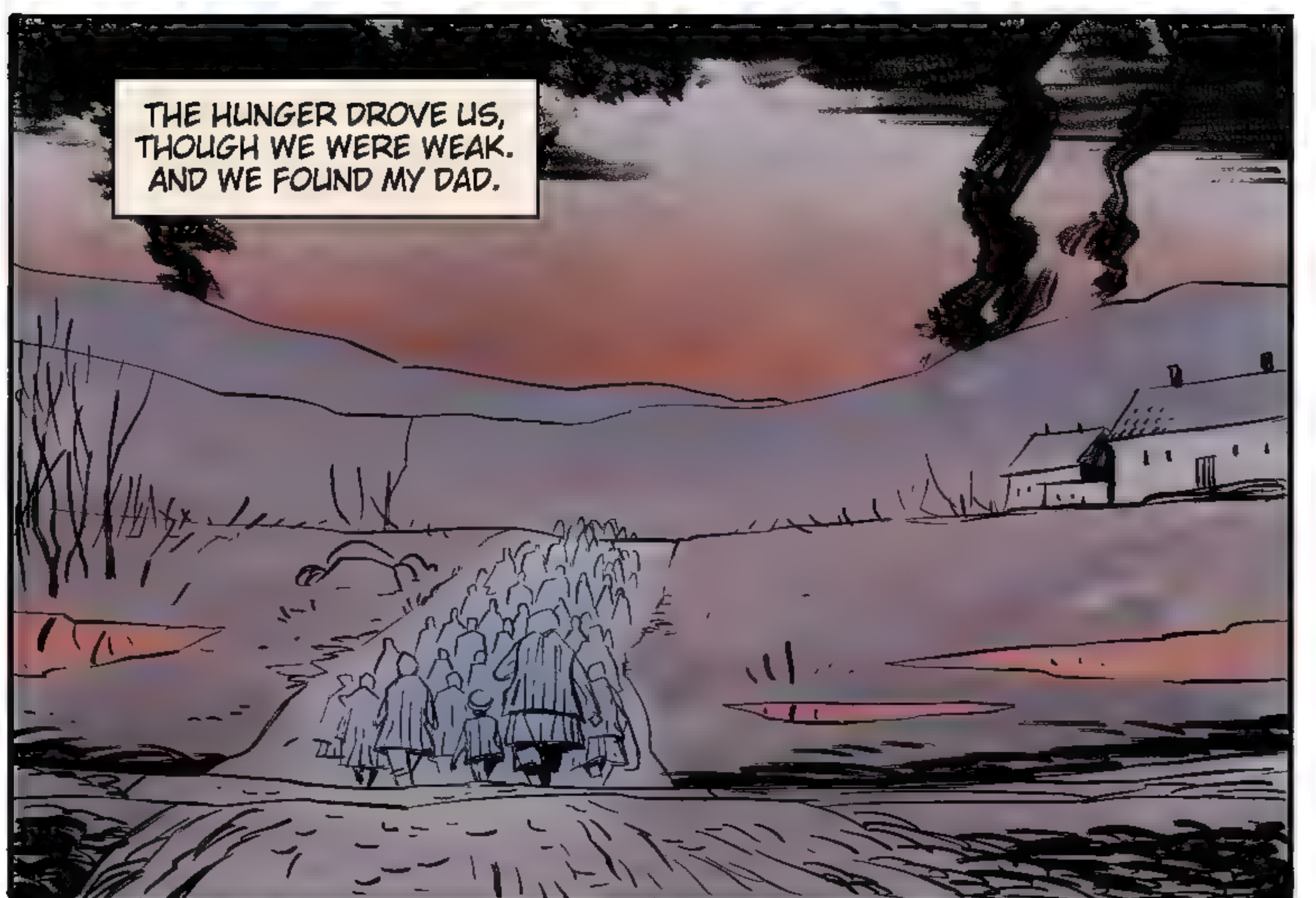
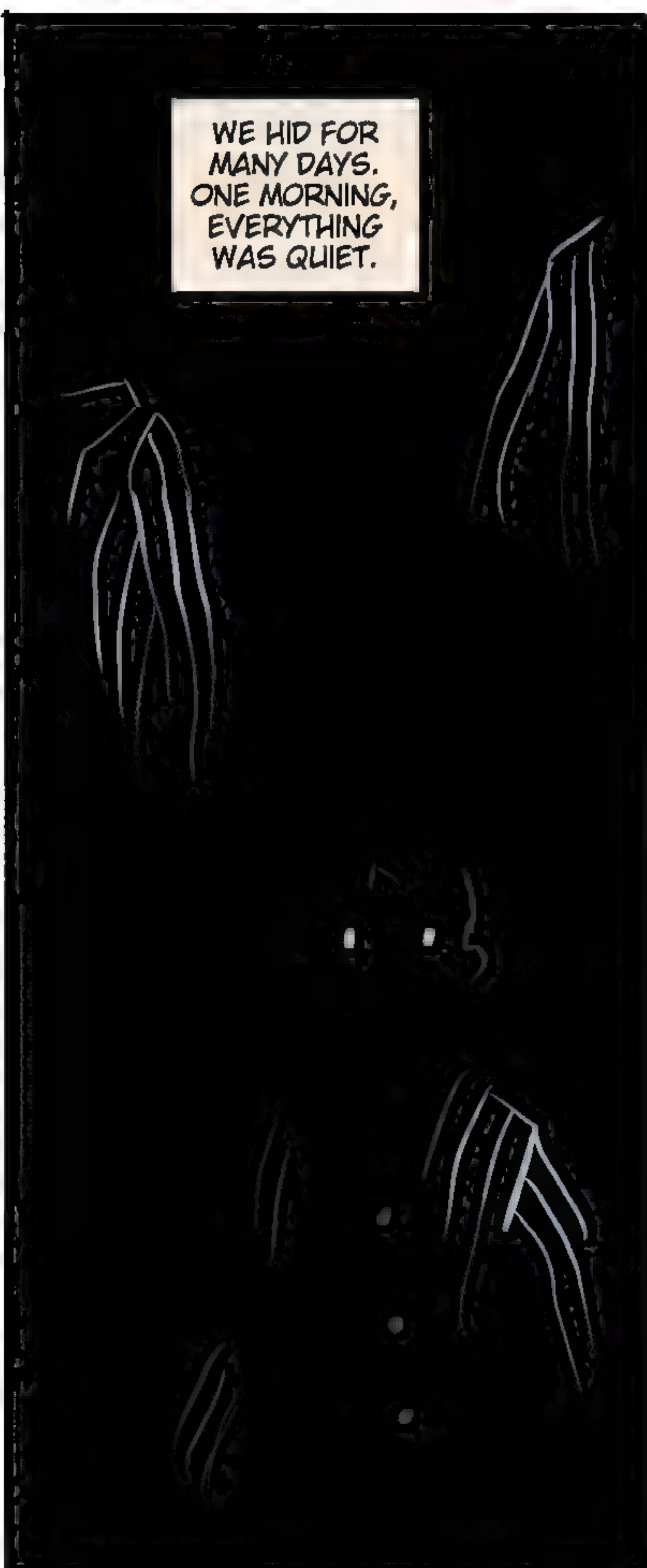
OUTSIDE BERLIN.



WHEN THE FACTORY WAS BUILT, FRANZ SEIFFERT SENT FOR HIS PRISONERS. WE WENT BY TRAIN TO A NEW PLACE WHERE WE WOULD CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR OUR LIVES.



WE WORKED ALL THROUGH THE DAYS, FROM EARLY MORNING TO SUNSET. WE WERE HUNTED AND BEATEN AS IN RAVENSBRÜCK. AND WE STARVED, JUST AS BEFORE.



WE RETURNED TO
LODZ, OUR OLD
HOMETOWN, AND
REOPENED OUR
GROCERY STORE.

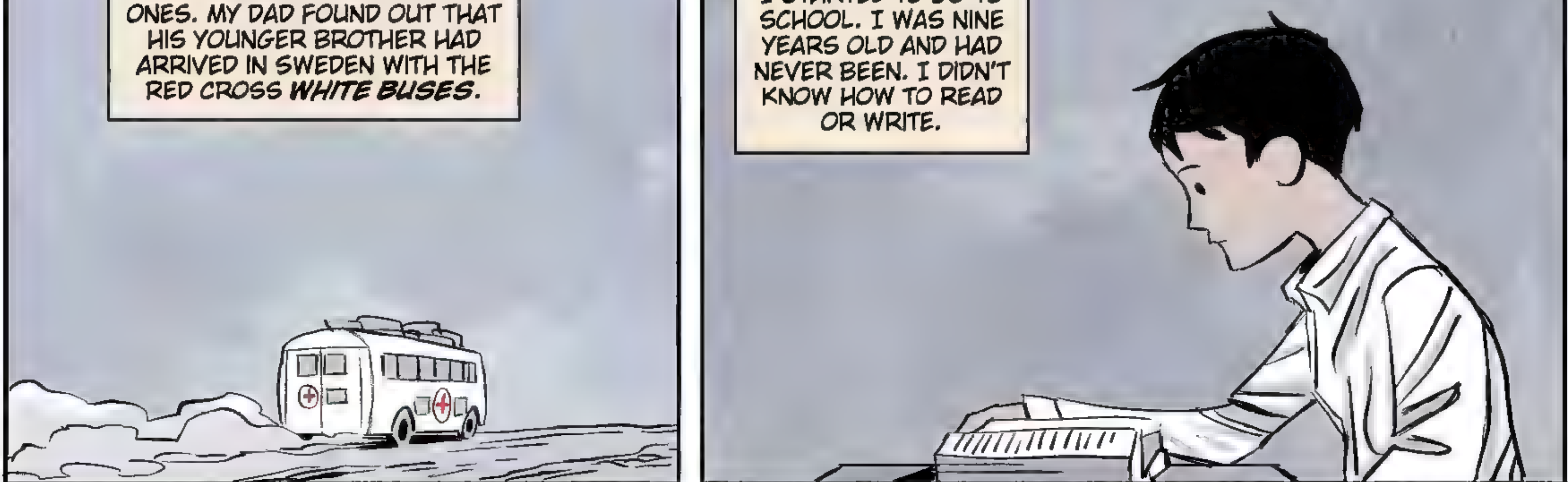


WE FOUND A NEW HOUSE
TO LIVE IN. OTHER
PEOPLE WERE LIVING
IN OUR OLD HOUSE.

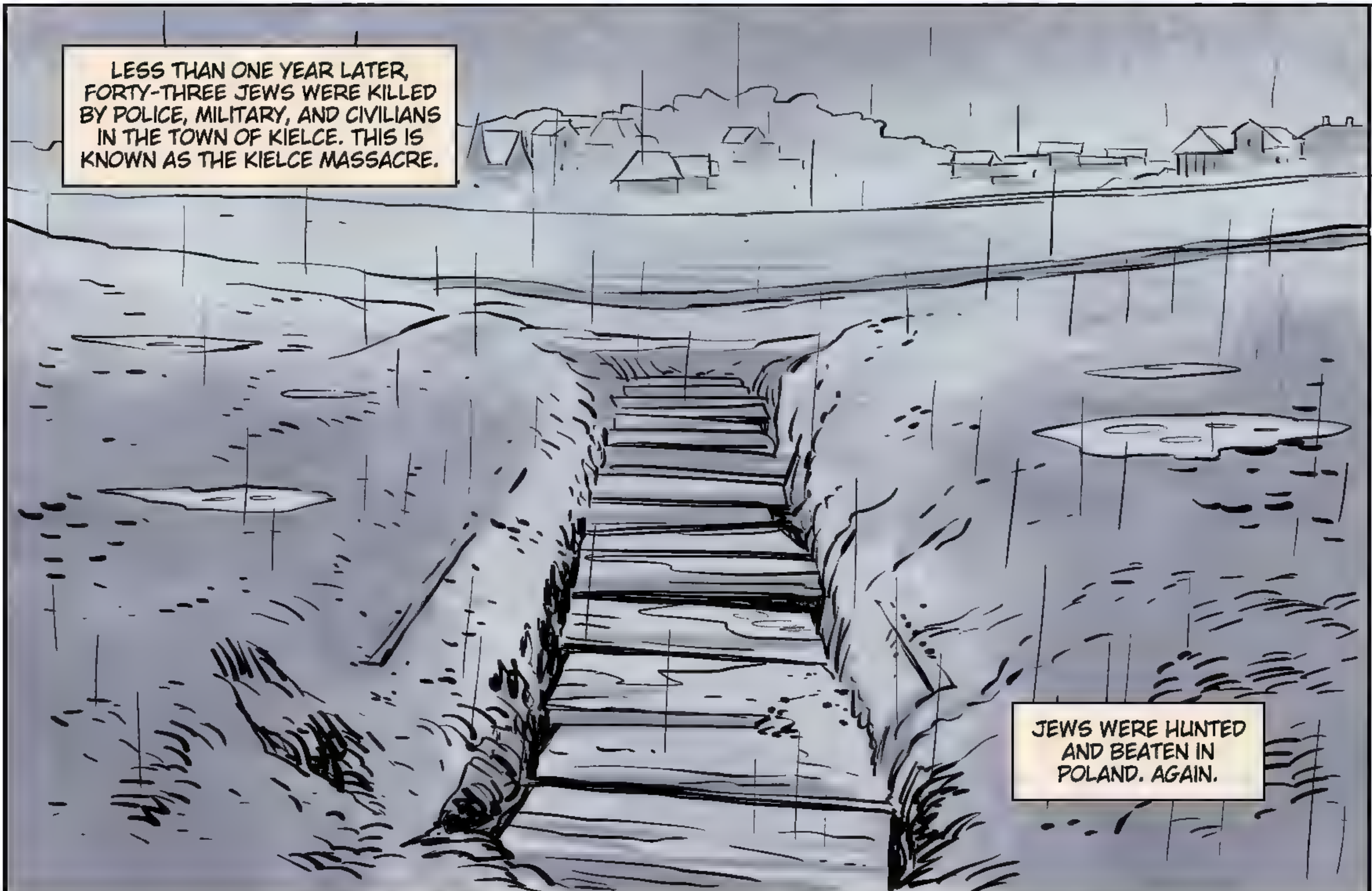
MY PARENTS SPENT ALL THEIR
TIME LOOKING FOR OUR LOVED
ONES. MY DAD FOUND OUT THAT
HIS YOUNGER BROTHER HAD
ARRIVED IN SWEDEN WITH THE
RED CROSS *WHITE BUSES*.



BY THE FALL OF 1945,
I STARTED TO GO TO
SCHOOL. I WAS NINE
YEARS OLD AND HAD
NEVER BEEN. I DIDN'T
KNOW HOW TO READ
OR WRITE.



LESS THAN ONE YEAR LATER,
FORTY-THREE JEWS WERE KILLED
BY POLICE, MILITARY, AND CIVILIANS
IN THE TOWN OF KIELCE. THIS IS
KNOWN AS THE KIELCE MASSACRE.



JEWS WERE HUNTED
AND BEATEN IN
POLAND. AGAIN.



MY DAD MISSED HIS BROTHER.

AFTER MANY BRIBES AND STRUGGLES, WE GOT PASSPORTS TO TRAVEL TO SWEDEN.

I WAS TWELVE YEARS OLD WHEN OUR TRAIN ARRIVED IN STOCKHOLM CENTRAL STATION. MY UNCLE MET US WITH AN ELDERLY AUNT OF MINE, WHO I HAD NEVER MET BEFORE.

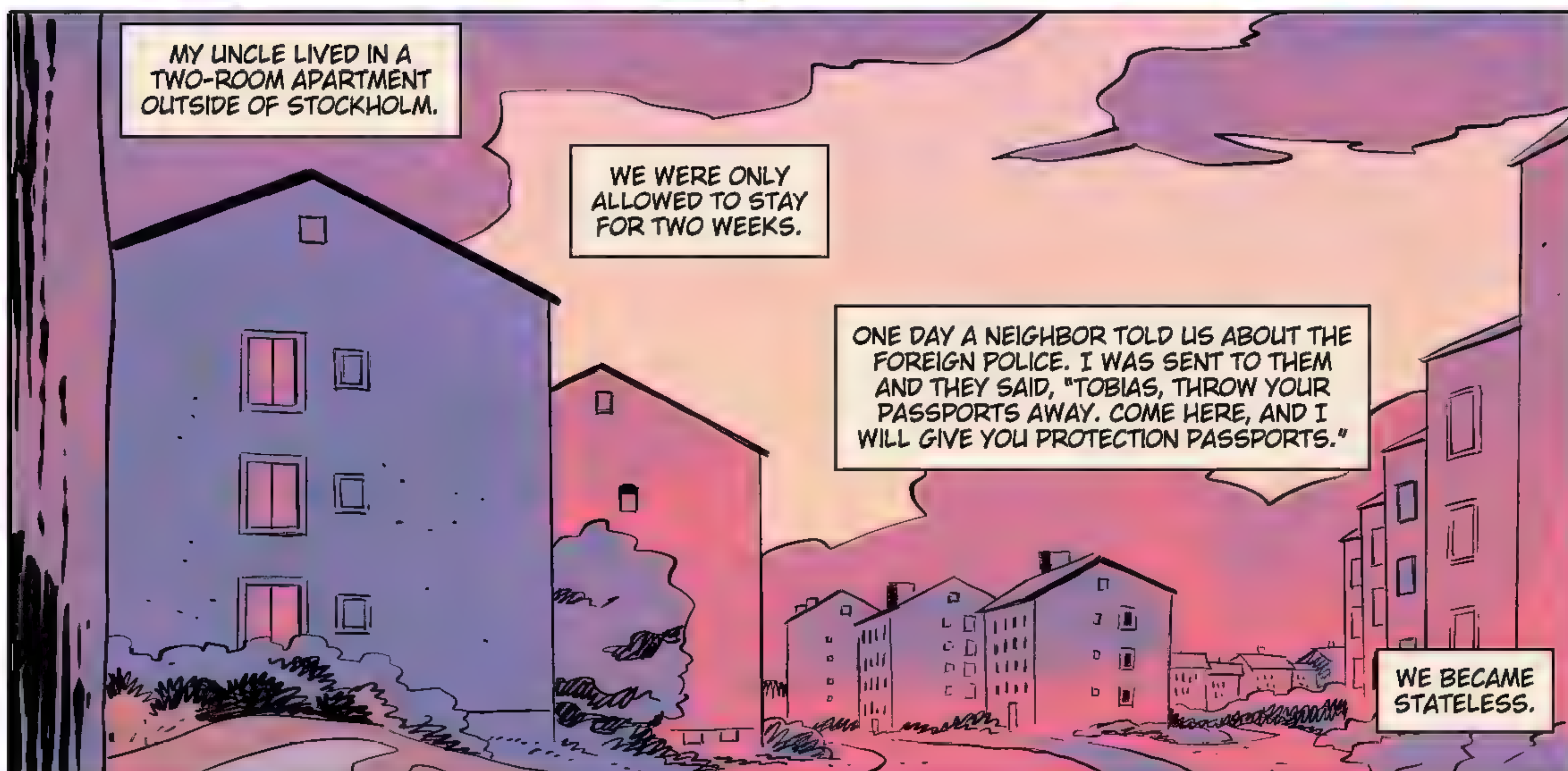
SHE ASKED ME MY NAME. "TOLEK," I ANSWERED.



TOLEK? THAT IS NOT A NAME HERE. YOU MUST HAVE A SWEDISH NAME. CHOOSE BETWEEN TOMMY OR TOBIAS.



I THOUGHT TOBIAS SEEMED NICE, SO THAT WAS MY CHOICE.



MY UNCLE LIVED IN A TWO-ROOM APARTMENT OUTSIDE OF STOCKHOLM.

WE WERE ONLY ALLOWED TO STAY FOR TWO WEEKS.

ONE DAY A NEIGHBOR TOLD US ABOUT THE FOREIGN POLICE. I WAS SENT TO THEM AND THEY SAID, "TOBIAS, THROW YOUR PASSPORTS AWAY. COME HERE, AND I WILL GIVE YOU PROTECTION PASSPORTS."

WE BECAME STATELESS.

BUT WE WERE
WELCOME.

AFTER A WHILE I
COULD START SCHOOL
AGAIN, IN SWEDEN.

I HAD ARRIVED
IN PARADISE.

WHEN I WAS TWENTY-FIVE
YEARS OLD, I MET MONIKA.
WE GOT MARRIED AND MADE
A HAPPY HOME FOR US AND
OUR THREE CHILDREN.





In 1992, **Tobias Rawet** heard the French historical revisionist Robert Faurisson claim that the Holocaust never happened. He was shocked. His terrible childhood experiences never took place? He decided to devote his life to telling the true story about what can happen when anti-democratic forces are allowed to reign, and to tell the truth about what can happen if everyone's human rights are not defended. Since then, he has called on every young person to open their eyes and to work for equality and tolerance.

MY NAME IS
LIVIA FRÄNKEL.

Livia

I WAS BORN IN SIGHET. THE TOWN
HAS HAD GREAT INFLUENCE ON
EUROPEAN AND JEWISH HISTORY.

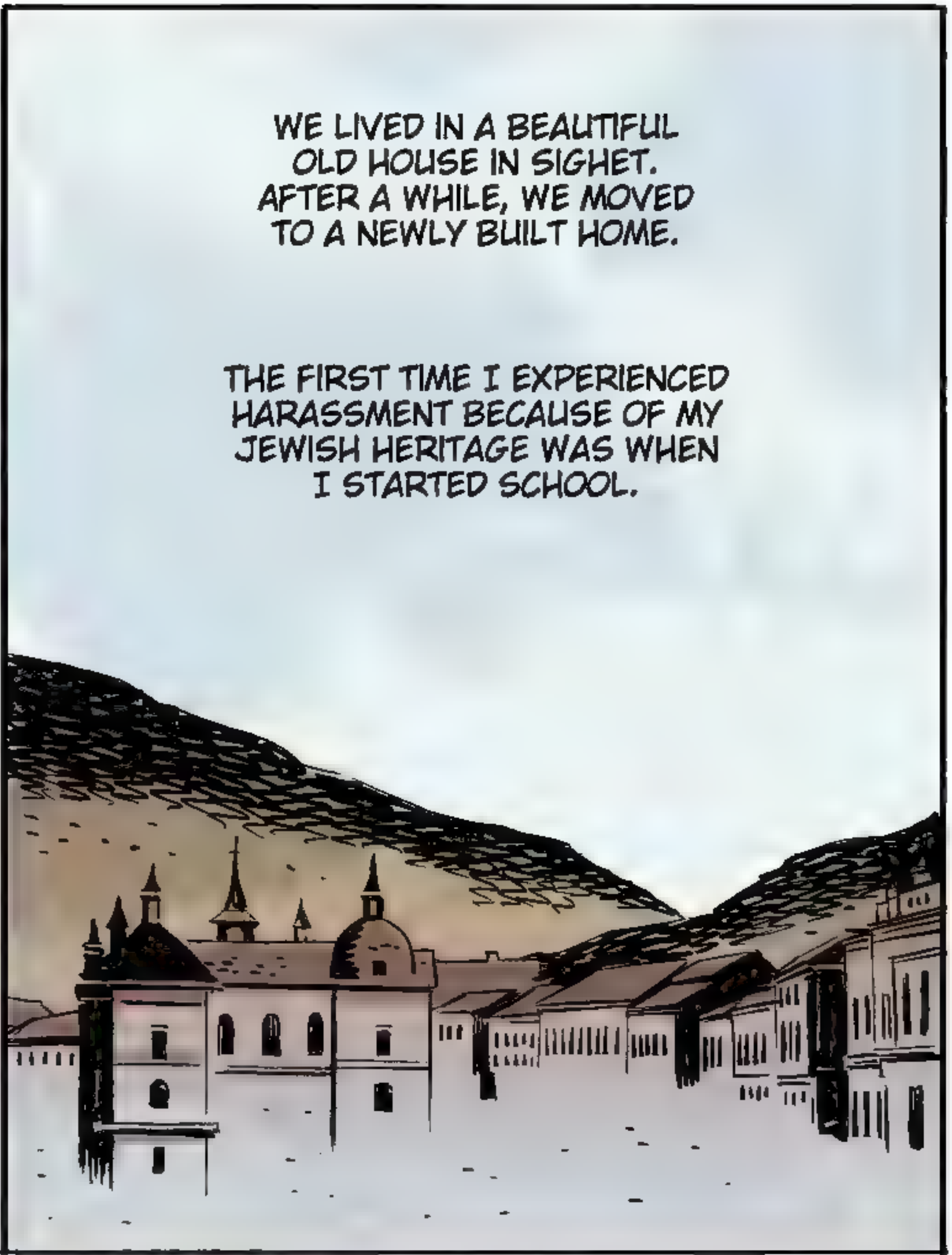
THE CITY OF SIGHET SITS IN THE
NORTH OF TRANSYLVANIA WHERE
THE RIVERS TISZA AND IZA MEET
IN A BILLOWY LANDSCAPE,
SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS.

THERE WERE FOUR OF US IN MY
FAMILY. ME AND MY OLDER SISTER HÉDI,
MY DAD IGNATZ, AND MY MUM FRIDA. AS
A CHILD I WAS LOVED VERY MUCH.

WHEN I THINK BACK I AM SO
GRATEFUL FOR ALL THE COMFORT,
CARE, AND SAFETY MY SIBLINGS AND I
WERE GIVEN. I BELIEVE THAT ONE CAN
WITHSTAND LIFE'S STRUGGLES MUCH
EASIER WITH A FOUNDATION OF LOVE.



WE WERE A MIDDLE-CLASS JEWISH FAMILY. MY DAD HAD A BUSINESS PRODUCING PACKAGING. MY SISTER AND I HAD EVERYTHING WE NEEDED.



WE LIVED IN A BEAUTIFUL OLD HOUSE IN Sighet. AFTER A WHILE, WE MOVED TO A NEWLY BUILT HOME.

THE FIRST TIME I EXPERIENCED HARASSMENT BECAUSE OF MY JEWISH HERITAGE WAS WHEN I STARTED SCHOOL.



STINKING, DISGUSTING JEW! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE WITH US NORMAL PEOPLE?

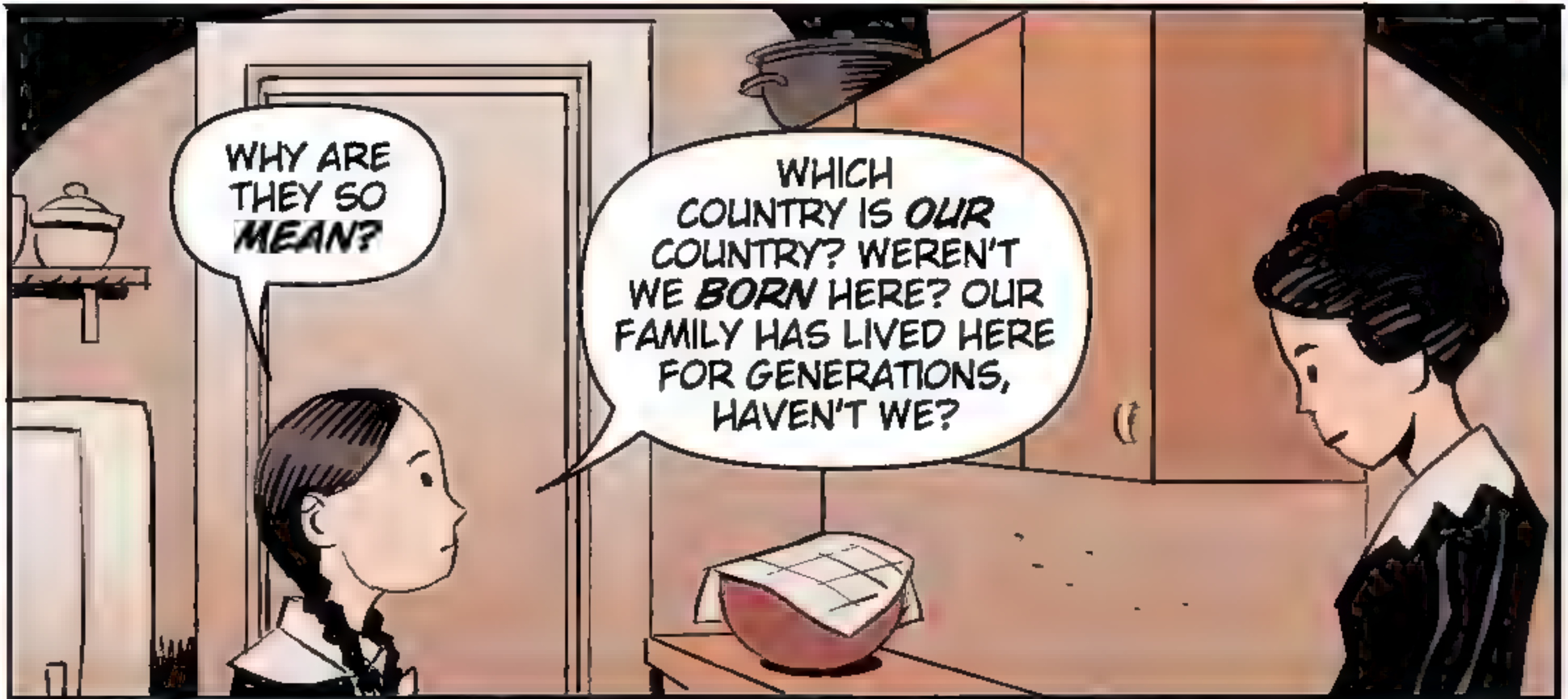
YOU MAKE THE AIR SMELL BAD. GO BACK TO YOUR OWN COUNTRY!

I WAS TERRIFIED. I RAN.



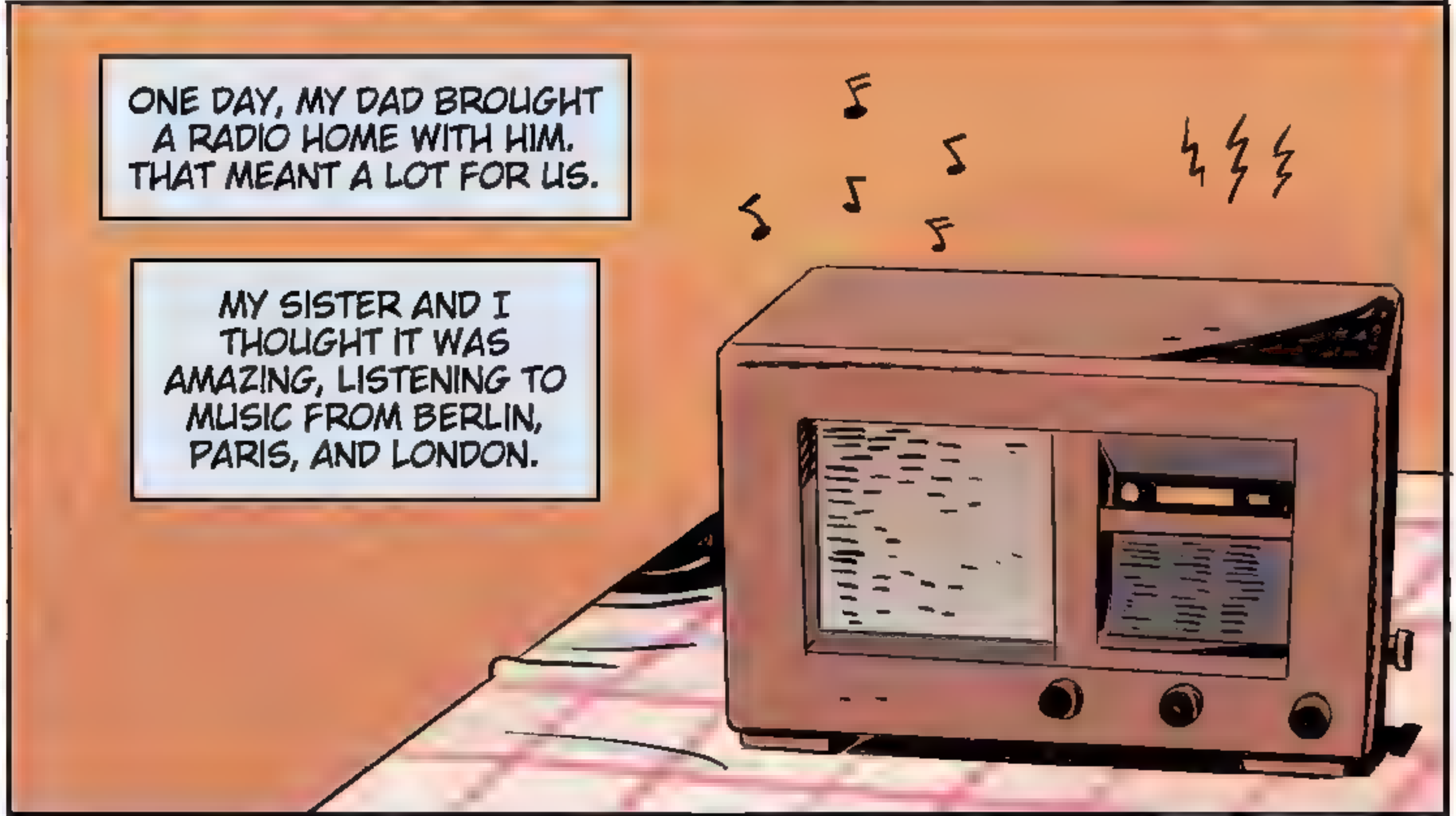
ONE OF THE BOYS CAME AFTER ME AND HE PUSHED ME OVER. I SCRAPED MY KNEE.

DEVASTATED, I RAN TO MY MUM. SHE WAS SITTING AT THE KITCHEN TABLE WHEN I GOT HOME. I LOOKED DESTROYED AND MY KNEE WAS BLEEDING.



WHY ARE THEY SO MEAN?

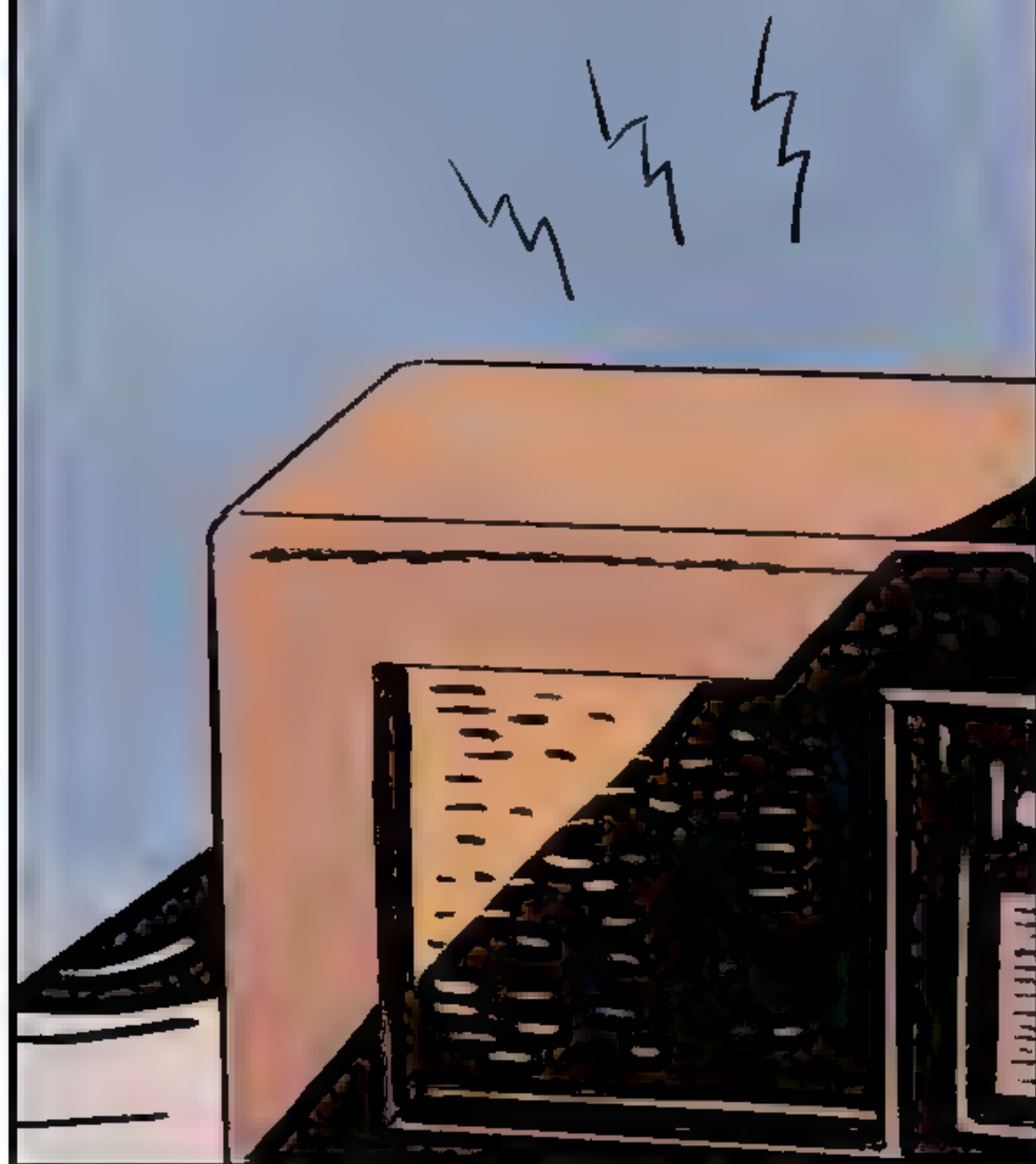
WHICH COUNTRY IS OUR COUNTRY? WEREN'T WE BORN HERE? OUR FAMILY HAS LIVED HERE FOR GENERATIONS, HAVEN'T WE?



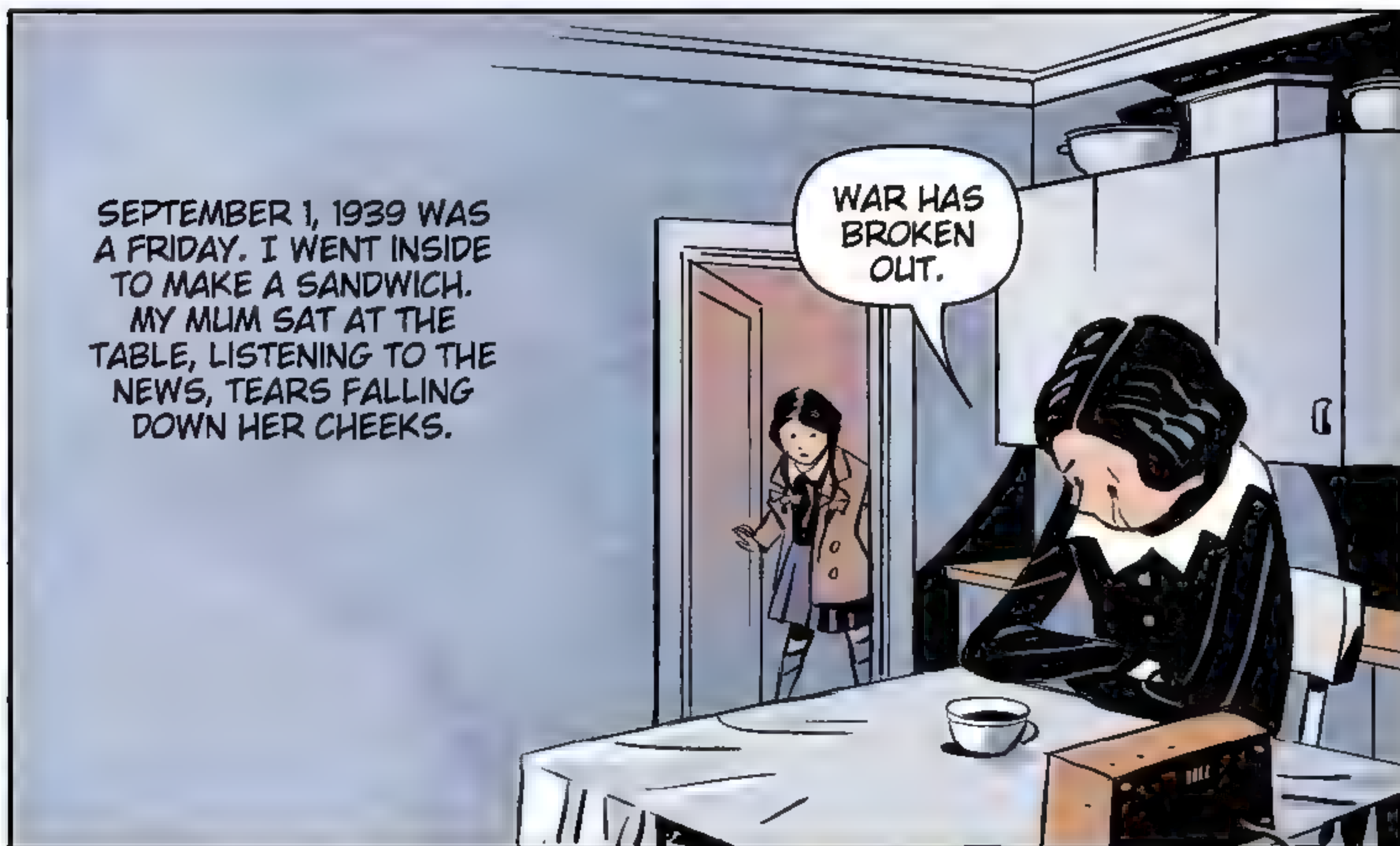
ONE DAY, MY DAD BROUGHT A RADIO HOME WITH HIM. THAT MEANT A LOT FOR US.

MY SISTER AND I THOUGHT IT WAS AMAZING, LISTENING TO MUSIC FROM BERLIN, PARIS, AND LONDON.

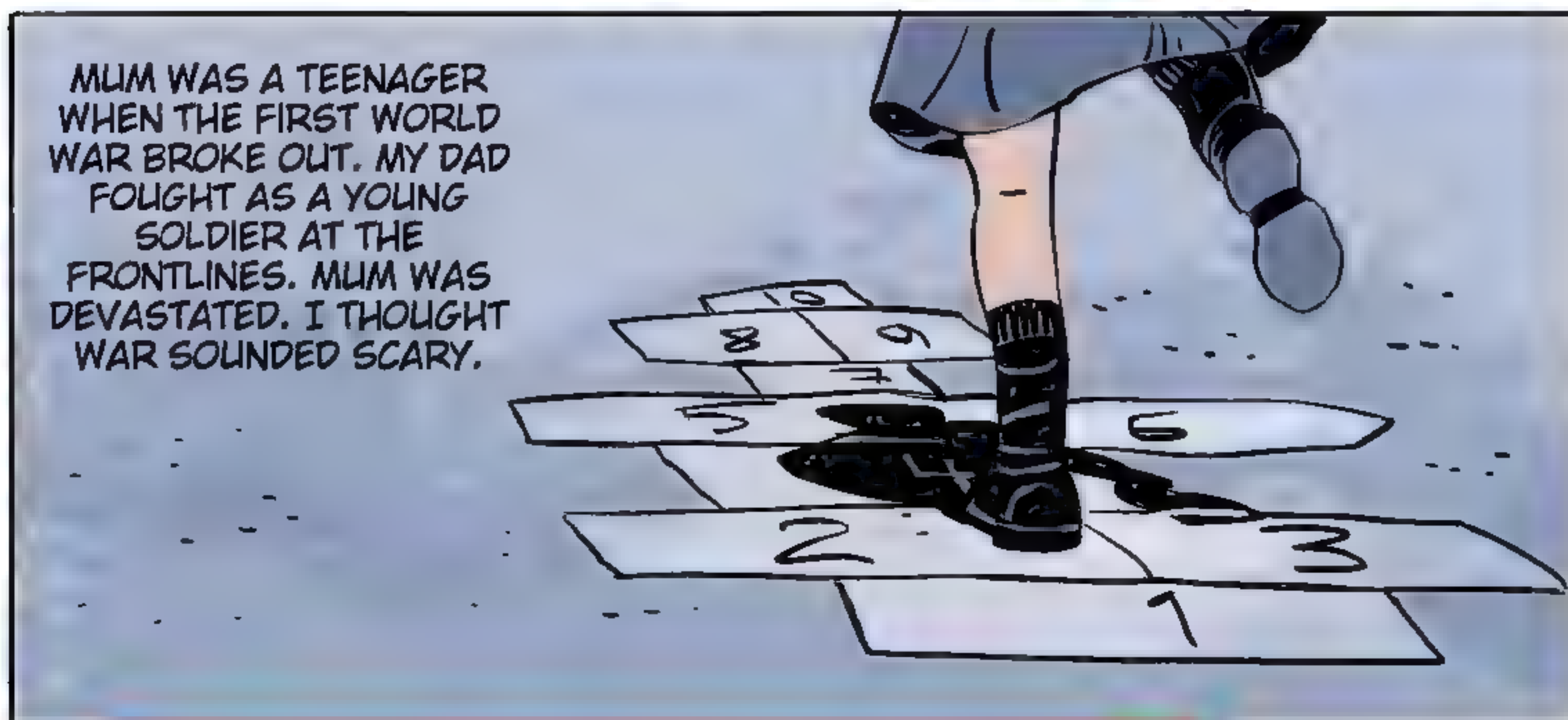
THE RADIO WAS IMPORTANT TO OUR PARENTS. THEY WANTED TO KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN EUROPE. DAD BOUGHT THE RADIO IN 1933, THE YEAR THAT HITLER GAINED POWER IN GERMANY.



SEPTEMBER 1, 1939 WAS A FRIDAY. I WENT INSIDE TO MAKE A SANDWICH. MY MUM SAT AT THE TABLE, LISTENING TO THE NEWS, TEARS FALLING DOWN HER CHEEKS.



MUM WAS A TEENAGER WHEN THE FIRST WORLD WAR BROKE OUT. MY DAD FOUGHT AS A YOUNG SOLDIER AT THE FRONTLINES. MUM WAS DEVASTATED. I THOUGHT WAR SOUNDED SCARY.



BUT IT WAS FAR AWAY. NO NEED TO CRY NOW, BEFORE WE KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN, I THOUGHT. I DRIED MY TEARS AND WENT OUT TO PLAY WITH MY FRIENDS.

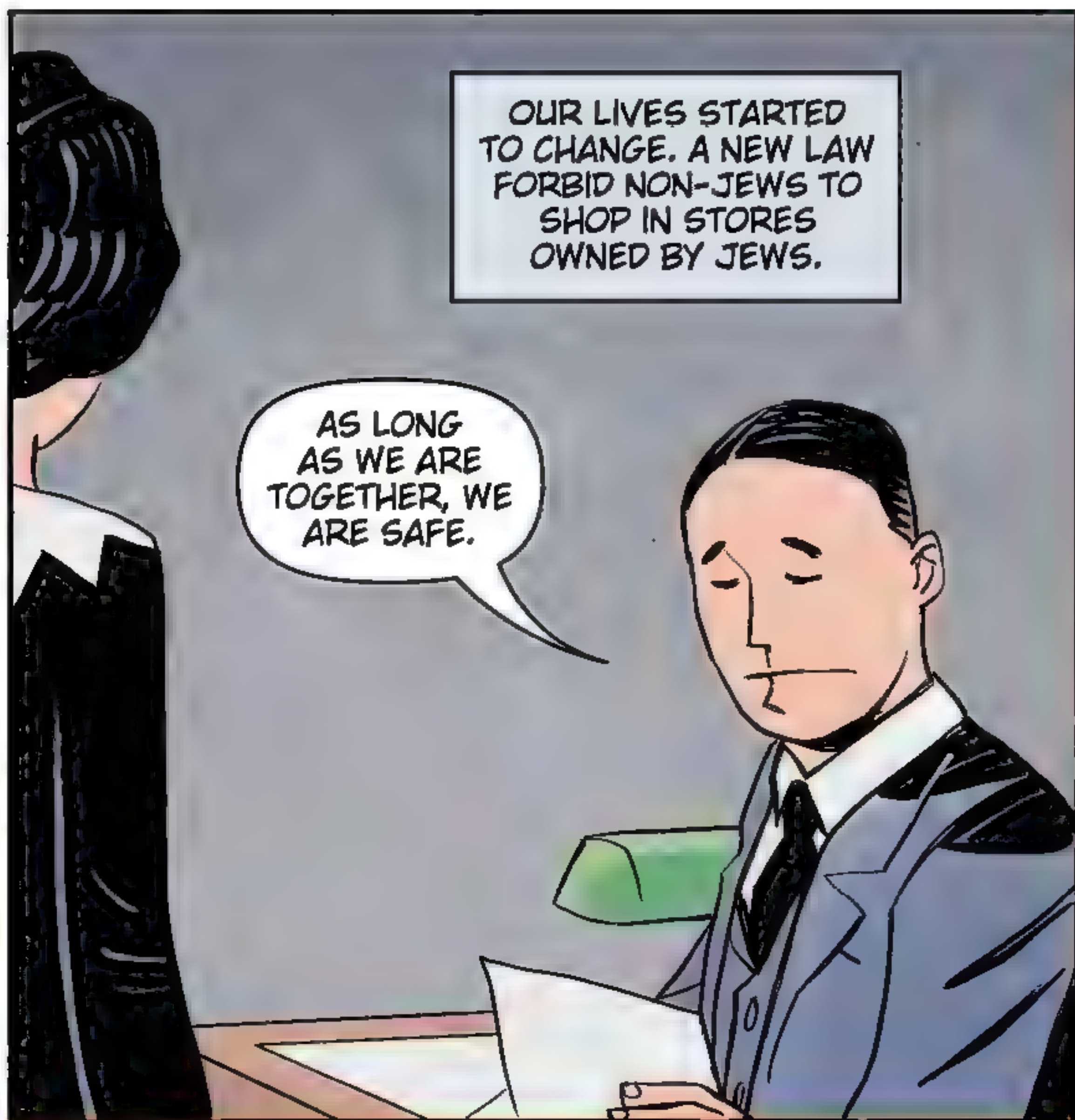


SOON, I STOPPED THINKING ABOUT THE WAR. IT WAS VERY QUIET AND PEACEFUL IN OUR TOWN. THOUGH WE HEARD OF BATTLES, AND NAZIS HUNTING JEWS, WE DIDN'T FEEL THREATENED.



THEN IN THE FALL OF 1940, OUR CITY BECAME PART OF HUNGARY INSTEAD OF ROMANIA. WE SWAPPED CITIZENSHIP IN ONE WEEK.

FROM NOW ON ALL TEACHING IN SCHOOL WAS IN HUNGARIAN. LUCKY FOR US, MY SISTER AND I ALREADY KNEW HOW TO READ AND WRITE IN THAT LANGUAGE.



OUR LIVES STARTED TO CHANGE. A NEW LAW FORBID NON-JEWS TO SHOP IN STORES OWNED BY JEWS.

AS LONG AS WE ARE TOGETHER, WE ARE SAFE.

WITH FEWER CUSTOMERS IN OUR SHOP, WE FELL ON ROUGH TIMES.

THEN THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT TOOK OUR BELONGINGS. WE WERE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE MONEY IN THE BANK, OR OWN JEWELRY, ART, OR CARPETS. WE COULD NOT HAVE ANY VEHICLES, CARS, OR HORSE CARRIAGES.

ALL THROUGH MY CHILDHOOD I HAD LONGED FOR A BICYCLE, BUT I HAD HAD TO WAIT BECAUSE IT WAS SO EXPENSIVE. FINALLY ON MY BIRTHDAY THE YEAR BEFORE THE LAW WAS INTRODUCED, I HAD GOTTEN MY RED BICYCLE.

NOW I WAS FORCED TO HAND IT TO THE AUTHORITIES. WE ALSO HANDED IN OUR RADIO. SLOWLY THINGS CHANGED, BUT WE TRIED TO KEEP OUR LIVES AS NORMAL AS WE COULD. ALL THE WHILE, WE HOPED FOR THE WAR TO END.

IN 1942, JEWS WERE NO LONGER ALLOWED TO GO TO HIGH SCHOOL. TO ME THAT WAS THE TOUGHEST CHANGE. MY SISTER HAD ONE YEAR LEFT UNTIL HER GRADUATION, AND I WAS JUST ABOUT TO START.




IN LARGER CITIES, THERE WERE JEWISH SCHOOLS, BUT THESE SCHOOLS WERE FAR AWAY. WE HAD TO STAY WITH OTHER FAMILIES.

OUR SCHOOL WAS IN THE CAPITAL OF TRANSYLVANIA, CLUJ. IT WAS FAR FROM HOME AND TRAVELING WAS EXPENSIVE. WE COULD ONLY COME HOME FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS AND SCHOOL BREAKS.



IT WAS HARD BEING SO FAR AWAY FROM MUM AND DAD.



SIGHET IS SITUATED BY THE BORDER WITH UKRAINE. IN 1943 WHEN I GOT HOME FOR WINTER BREAK, THERE WERE A LOT OF RUMORS SAYING THE RUSSIANS WERE CLOSE. IF THE RUSSIANS CAME THE WAR WOULD BE OVER.

MY DAD THOUGHT THINGS COULD GET CHAOTIC SO HE ASKED ME TO STAY HOME AND NOT GO BACK TO SCHOOL UNTIL THINGS CALMED DOWN.

HE SAID THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WAS FOR US TO BE TOGETHER. THAT SOUNDED OKAY TO ME.

I HAD MY BOOKS AND COULD KEEP UP WITH MY STUDIES FROM HOME. IF THE RUSSIANS ARRIVED AND THE WAR ENDED, MY LIFE COULD CONTINUE AS BEFORE.

MANY OF MY FRIENDS STUDIED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY. WE HADN'T SEEN EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME AND WERE ALL BACK IN SIGHET FOR WINTER BREAK. WE DECIDED TO CELEBRATE NEW YEAR'S EVE AT A GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE WHOSE PARENTS WERE AWAY. WE COOKED A NICE MEAL AND LISTENED TO THE LATEST JAZZ.

WE SAT AROUND THE TABLE AND TOLD EACH OTHER OUR DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE, TAKING TURNS TALKING ABOUT OUR PLANS FOR WHEN THE WAR WAS OVER.

WE WERE CONVINCED WE'D MEET AGAIN IN THE COMING YEAR, 1945, WHEN WE'D FINALLY BE FREE. WE'D MEET AGAIN AND TELL EACH OTHER ABOUT WHAT WE HAD DONE DURING THE YEAR THAT HAD PASSED.

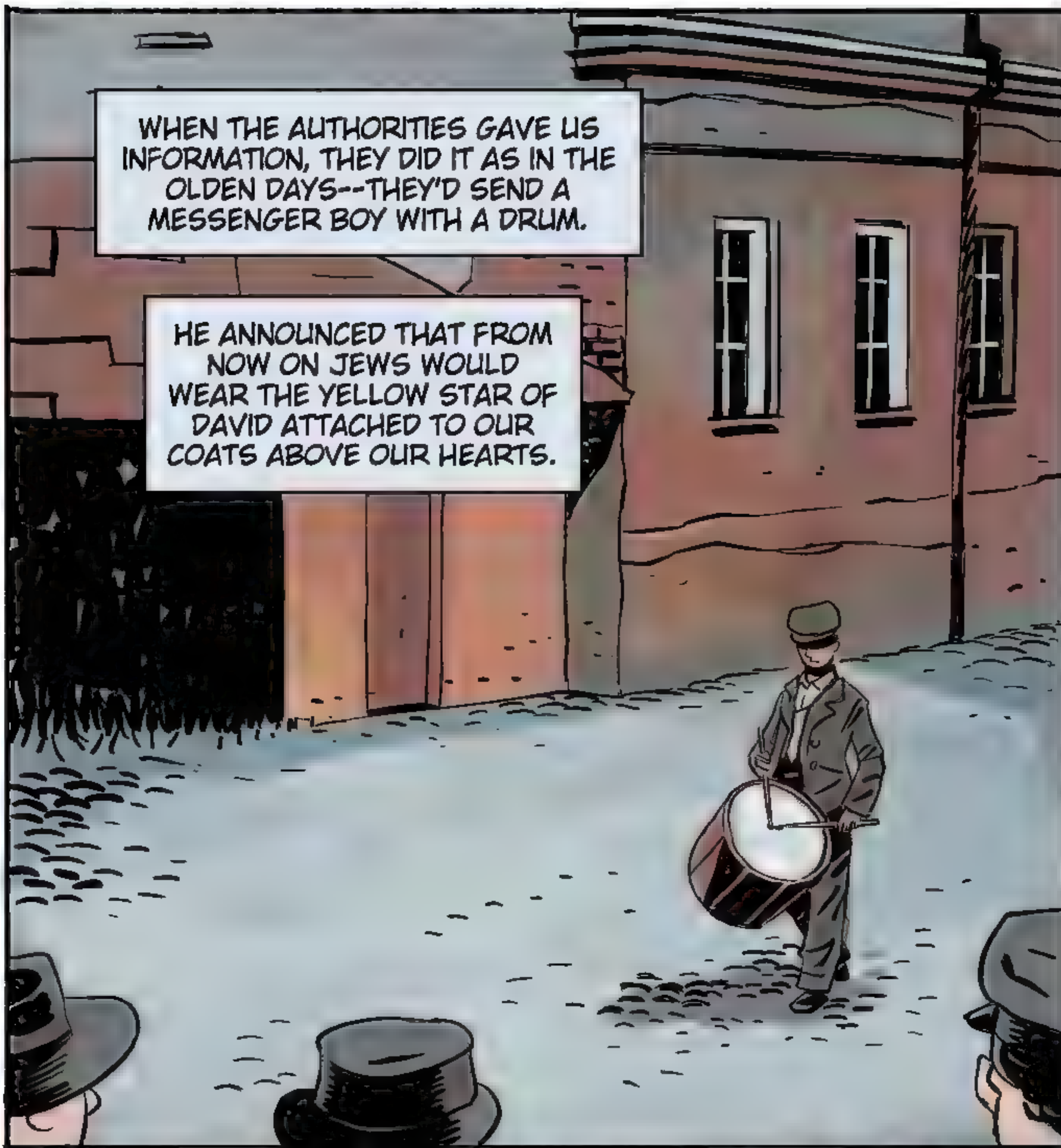
BUT THAT NEVER HAPPENED.

THE NEW YEAR CAME. I WAS HOME IN SIGHET WAITING FOR THE RUSSIANS. INSTEAD, ONE DAY, GERMAN SOLDIERS CAME DOWN THE STREETS. FOR THE FIRST TIME I FEARED FOR OUR LIVES.

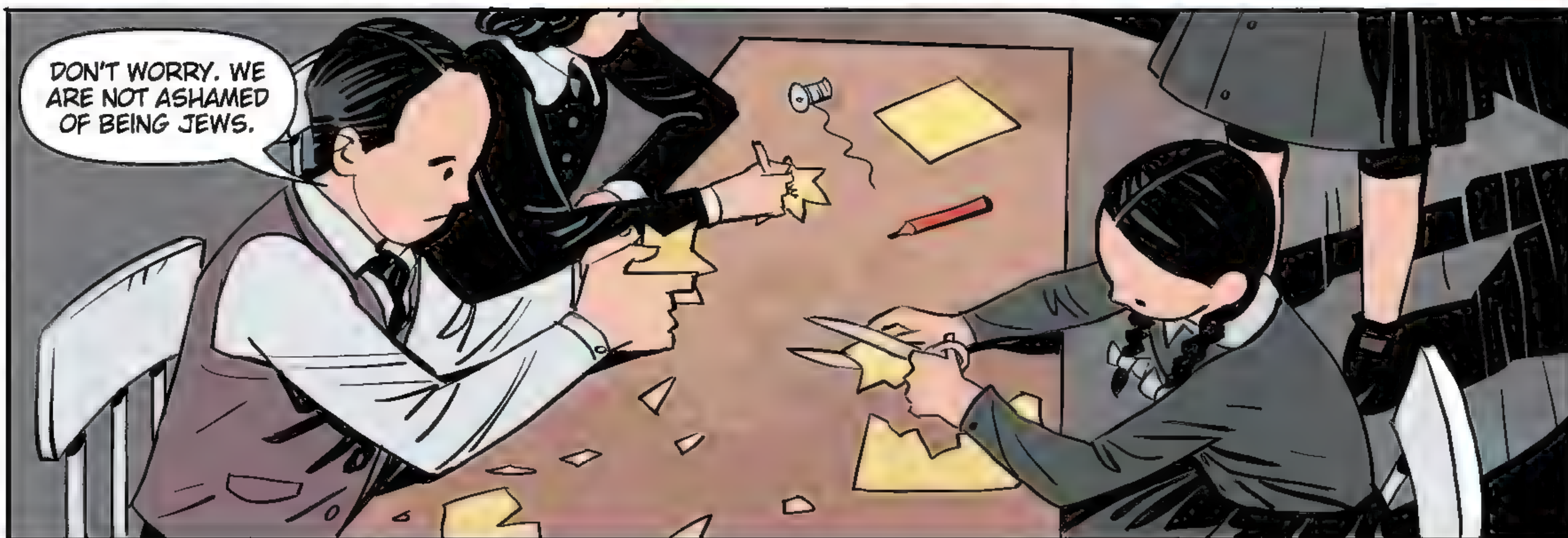


WHEN THE AUTHORITIES GAVE US INFORMATION, THEY DID IT AS IN THE OLDEN DAYS--THEY'D SEND A MESSENGER BOY WITH A DRUM.

HE ANNOUNCED THAT FROM NOW ON JEWS WOULD WEAR THE YELLOW STAR OF DAVID ATTACHED TO OUR COATS ABOVE OUR HEARTS.



DON'T WORRY. WE ARE NOT ASHAMED OF BEING JEWS.

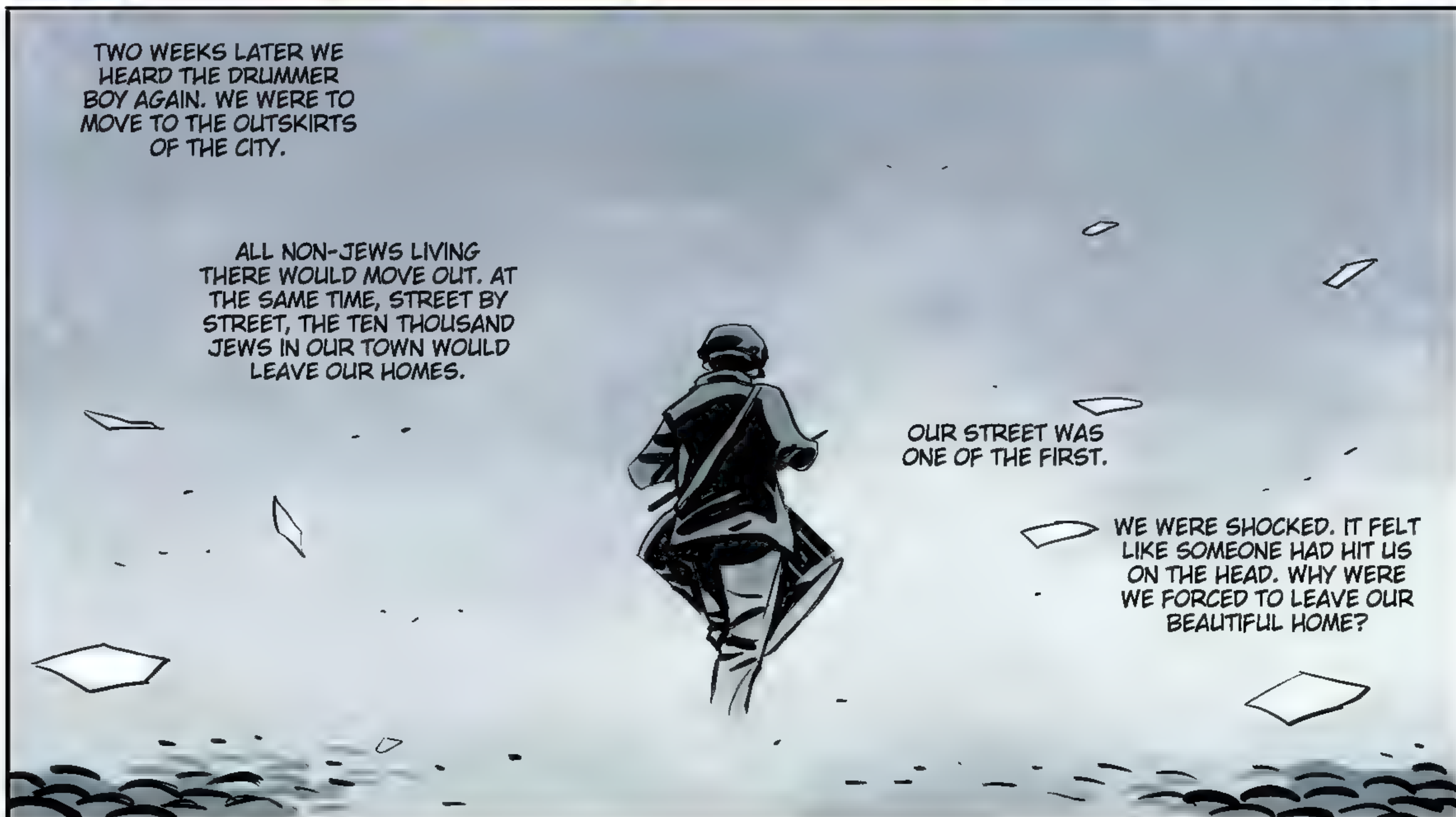


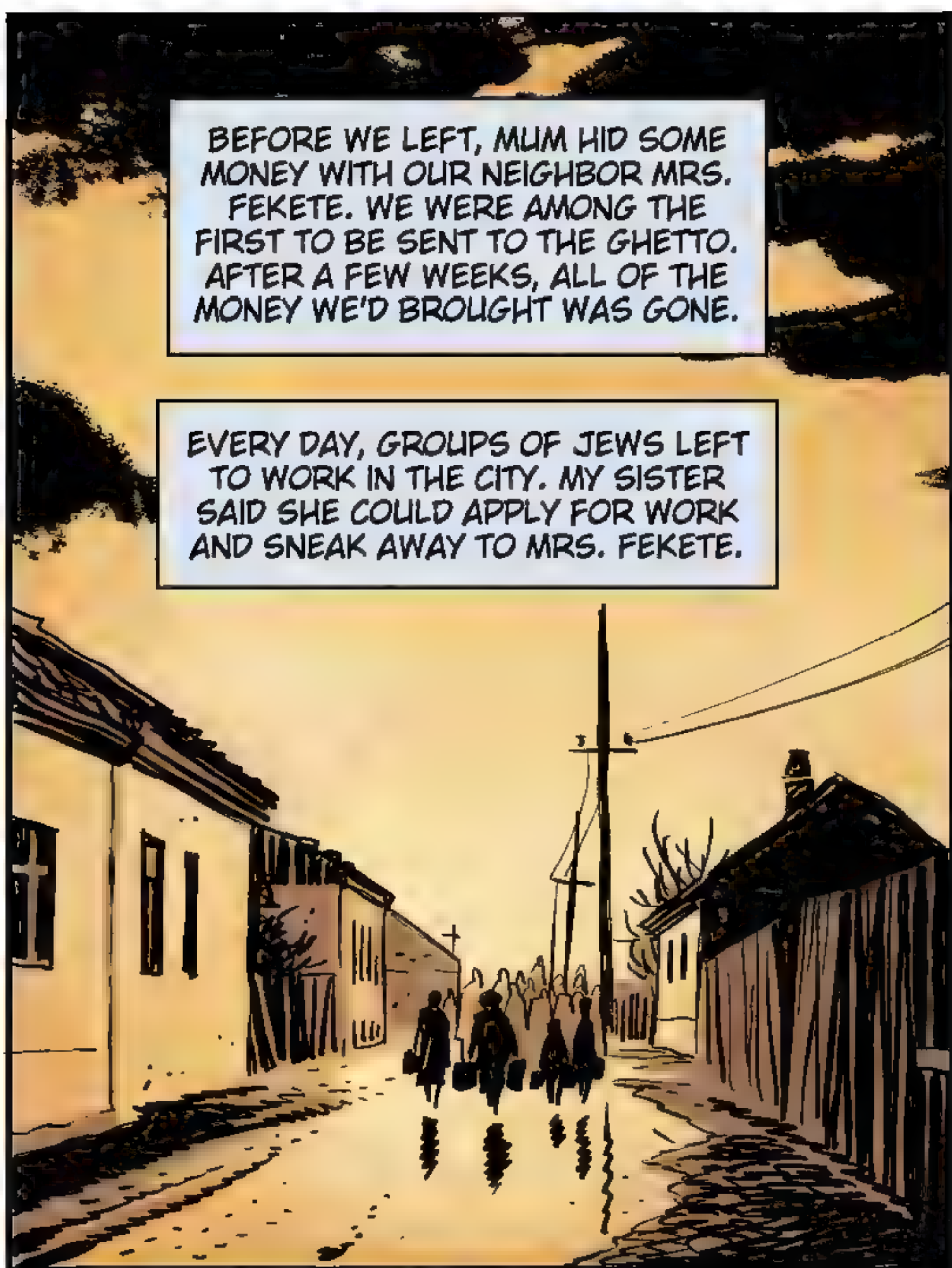
TWO WEEKS LATER WE HEARD THE DRUMMER BOY AGAIN. WE WERE TO MOVE TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY.

ALL NON-JEWS LIVING THERE WOULD MOVE OUT. AT THE SAME TIME, STREET BY STREET, THE TEN THOUSAND JEWS IN OUR TOWN WOULD LEAVE OUR HOMES.

OUR STREET WAS ONE OF THE FIRST.

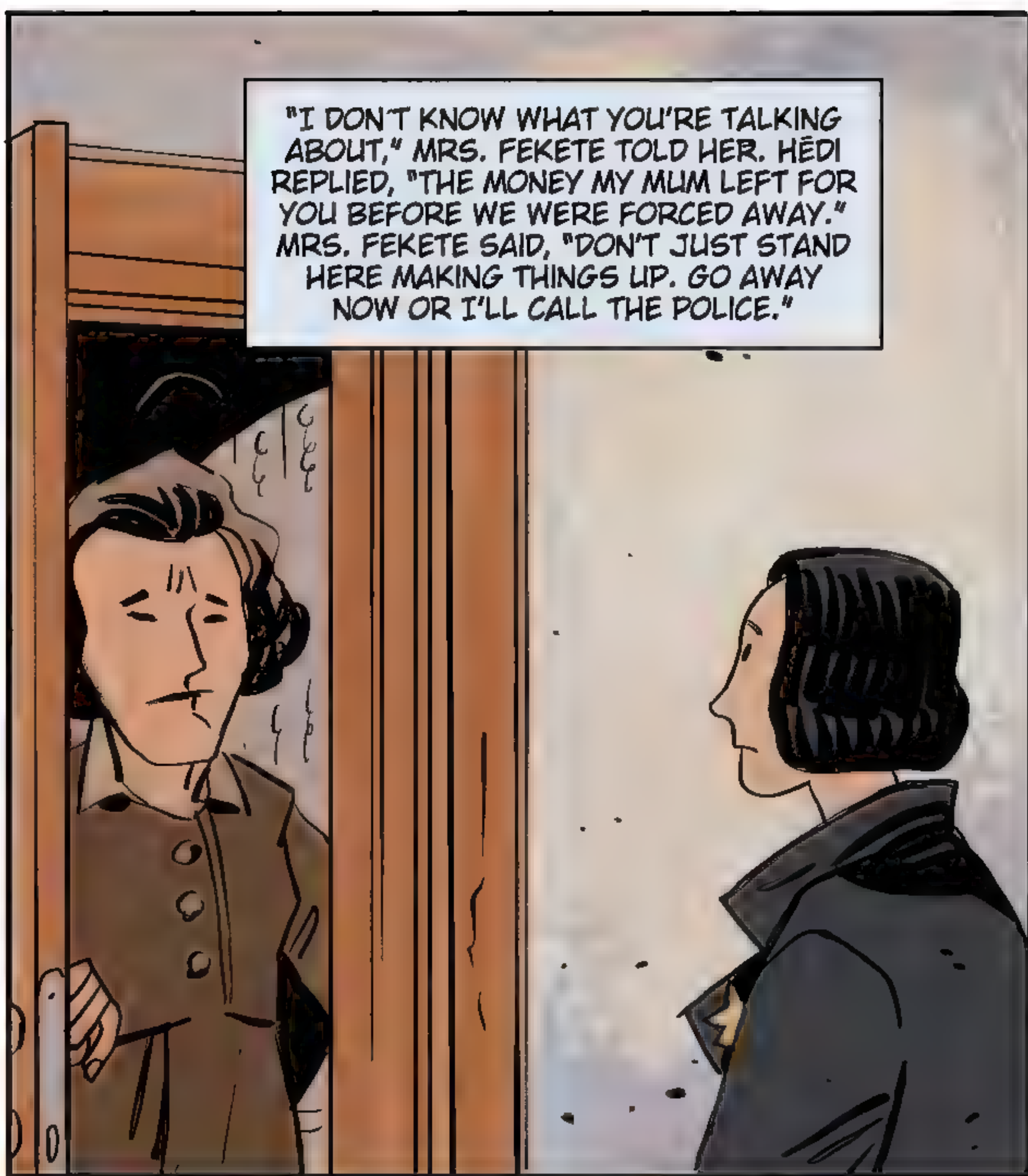
WE WERE SHOCKED. IT FELT LIKE SOMEONE HAD HIT US ON THE HEAD. WHY WERE WE FORCED TO LEAVE OUR BEAUTIFUL HOME?





BEFORE WE LEFT, MUM HID SOME MONEY WITH OUR NEIGHBOR MRS. FEKETE. WE WERE AMONG THE FIRST TO BE SENT TO THE GHETTO. AFTER A FEW WEEKS, ALL OF THE MONEY WE'D BROUGHT WAS GONE.

EVERY DAY, GROUPS OF JEWS LEFT TO WORK IN THE CITY. MY SISTER SAID SHE COULD APPLY FOR WORK AND SNEAK AWAY TO MRS. FEKETE.

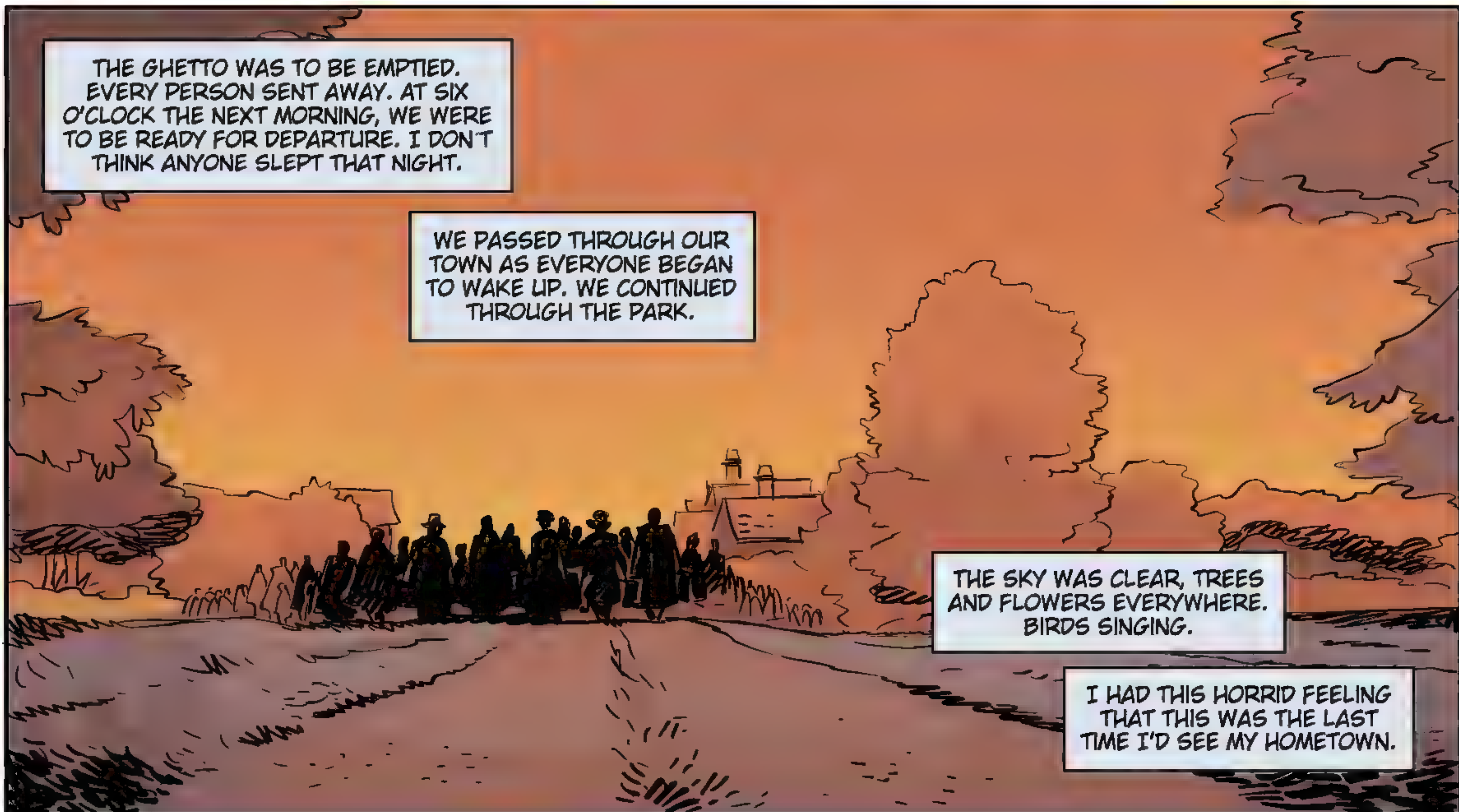


"I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT," MRS. FEKETE TOLD HER. HEDI REPLIED, "THE MONEY MY MUM LEFT FOR YOU BEFORE WE WERE FORCED AWAY." MRS. FEKETE SAID, "DON'T JUST STAND HERE MAKING THINGS UP. GO AWAY NOW OR I'LL CALL THE POLICE."



HEDI WENT AWAY WITHOUT THE MONEY. MRS. FEKETE KEPT EVERYTHING FOR HERSELF.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS ALL OF THE JEWS IN Sighet HAD BEEN MOVED. WE HEARD THE SOUND FROM THE DRUMMER AGAIN. BY THEN WE HAD NOTHING LEFT. I THOUGHT, IS IT OUR LIVES THEY WANT?




THE GHETTO WAS TO BE EMPTIED. EVERY PERSON SENT AWAY. AT SIX O'CLOCK THE NEXT MORNING, WE WERE TO BE READY FOR DEPARTURE. I DON'T THINK ANYONE SLEPT THAT NIGHT.

WE PASSED THROUGH OUR TOWN AS EVERYONE BEGAN TO WAKE UP. WE CONTINUED THROUGH THE PARK.

THE SKY WAS CLEAR, TREES AND FLOWERS EVERYWHERE. BIRDS SINGING.

I HAD THIS HORRID FEELING THAT THIS WAS THE LAST TIME I'D SEE MY HOMETOWN.



WE PASSED OUR OLD SCHOOL AND REACHED THE RAILWAY STATION. TRAIN CARS WAITED ON THE TRACKS. "MAX TEN HORSES" WAS MARKED ON THE SIDE OF THE CARS. EIGHTY JEWS WERE PUT INTO EACH WAGON.

OUR TRAIN STOPPED AT SEVERAL STATIONS. I WOULD STRETCH MY HEAD OUT THROUGH THE BARS. PEOPLE STARED. I CALLED OUT TO THEM, "PLEASE, *PLEASE*, COULD YOU GIVE US SOME WATER?" BUT THEY ONLY STOOD THERE. SOME PRETENDED NOT TO HEAR.

WE STARTED TO PRAY TO GOD THAT OUR JOURNEY WOULD END. IT WAS SO HIDEOUS IN THE TRAIN CAR THAT EVEN DEATH WOULD'VE BEEN BETTER.

WHEN WE JUMPED DOWN AT THE PLATFORM, I HEARD THE COMMANDS--"MEN, GATHER OVER THERE," AND, "WOMEN, OVER THERE."

EVERYTHING HAPPENED SO QUICKLY. WHEN I TURNED, THE GROUP OF MEN HAD ALREADY LEFT. I NEVER GOT TO HUG MY FATHER THAT ONE LAST TIME.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE ARRANGED IN LINES OF FIVE. THERE WERE LOTS OF PEOPLE, SO IT WAS CHAOTIC. I KNEW THEY WERE GOING TO KILL US.

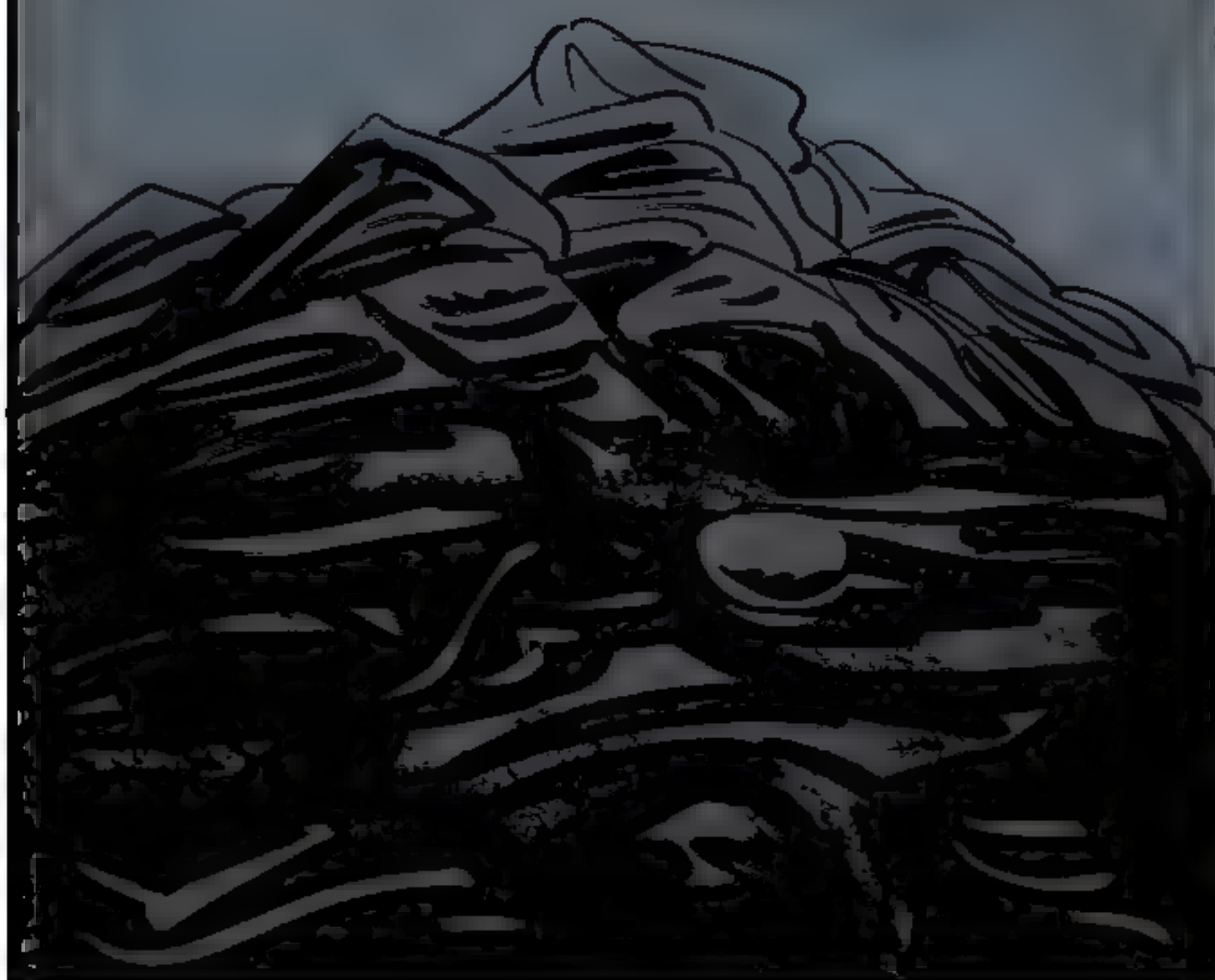
I ACCEPTED MY DESTINY AND HOPED FOR A QUICK AND PAINLESS DEATH. AFTER A FEW HOURS, OUR TIME HAD COME.



THE S.S. OFFICER JUST STARED AT US. LATER WE LEARNED HE WAS THE NOTORIOUS DR. JOSEF MENGELE. HE LOOKED AT MUM AND POINTED TO THE LEFT. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO CONTINUE IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. THEY TOLD US TO UNDRESS. THE FACT THAT WE WERE UNDRESSING IN FRONT OF MEN DIDN'T EVEN SEEM TO MATTER.



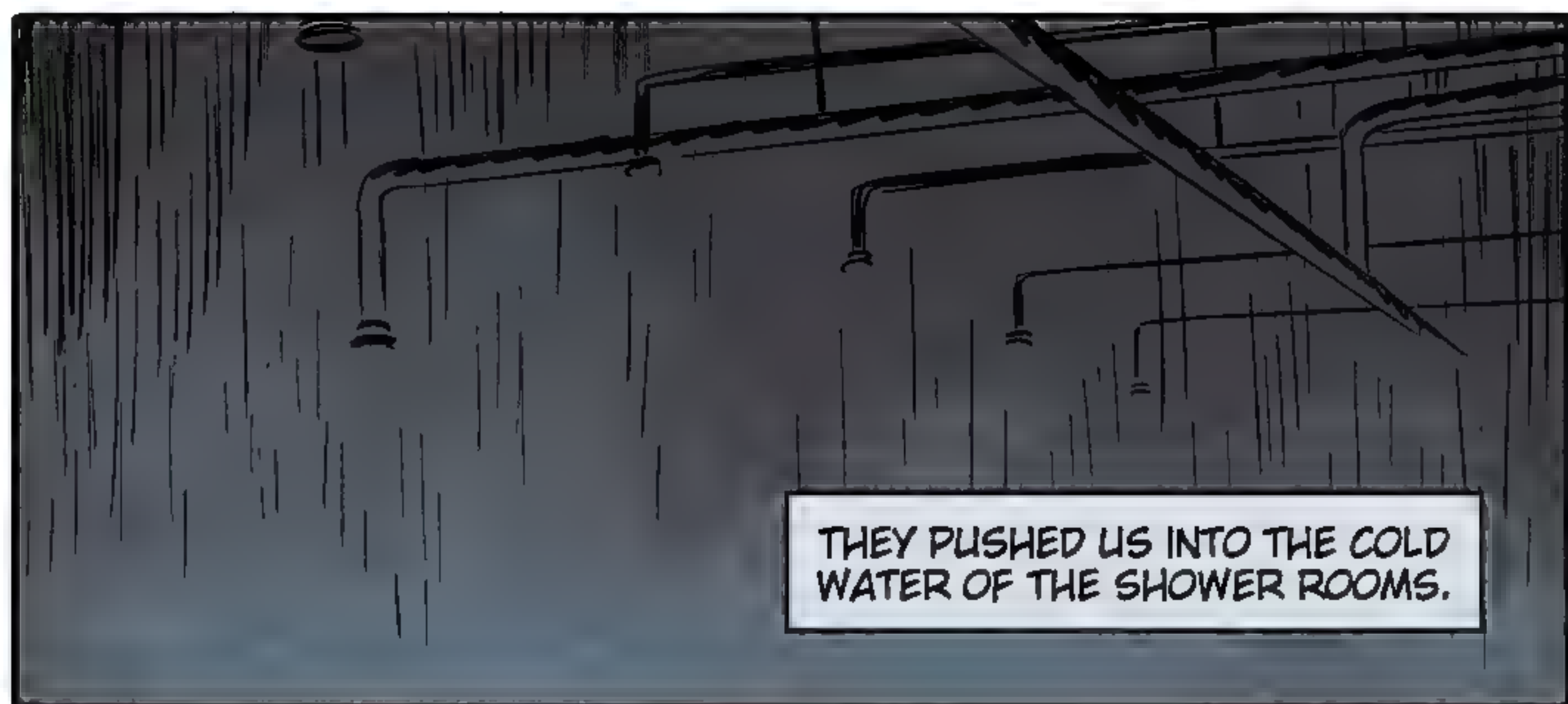
WE TOOK OUR CLOTHES OFF AND PUT THEM IN A PILE, BUT KEPT OUR SHOES. I SQUEEZED MY BLACK BOOTS IN MY HANDS. WHEN I REALIZED WE WOULDN'T GET OUR CLOTHES BACK, I STUFFED MY LAST BELONGING, MY TOOTHBRUSH AND MY SILVER NECKLACE, INTO MY SHOES.

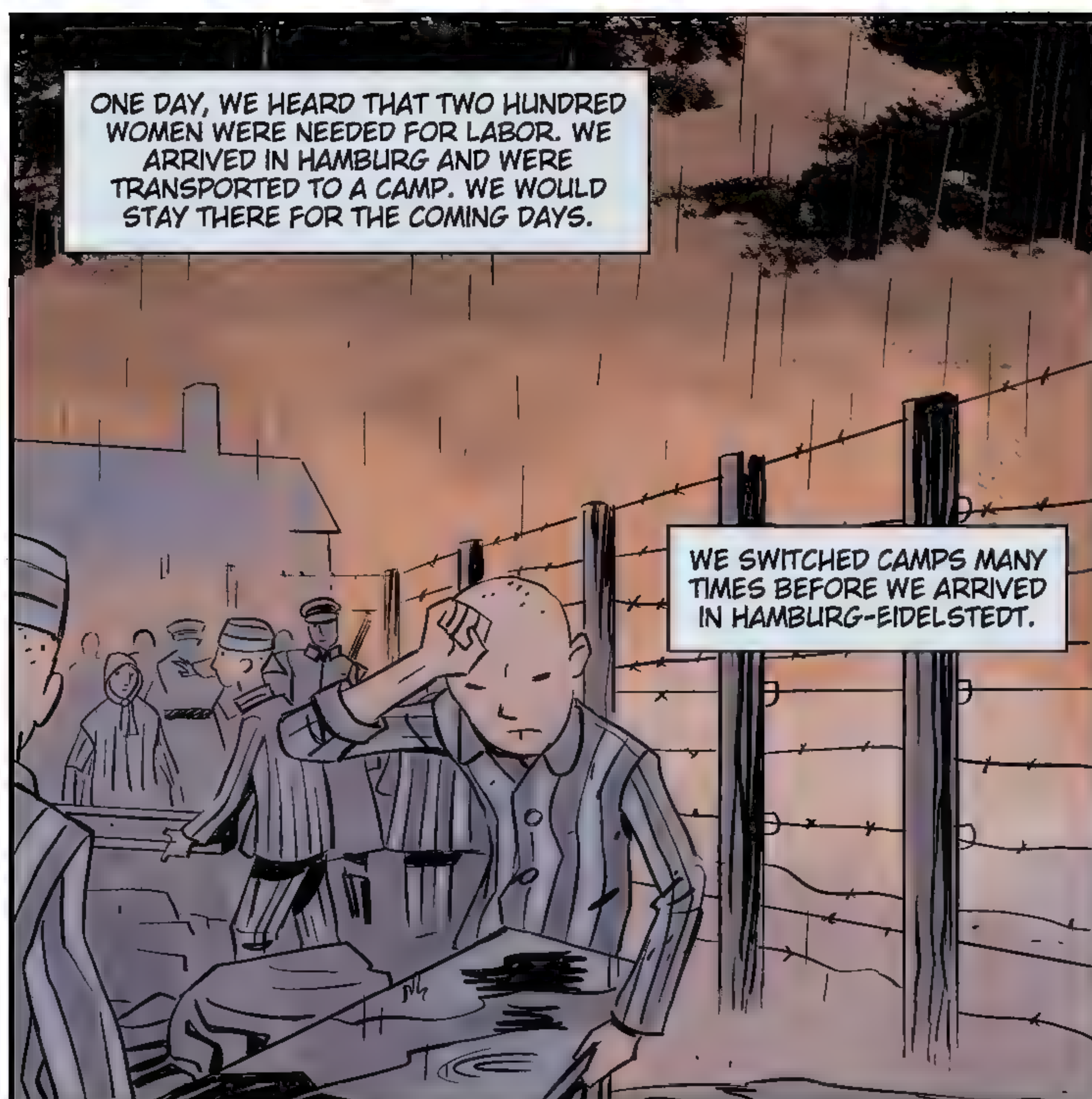
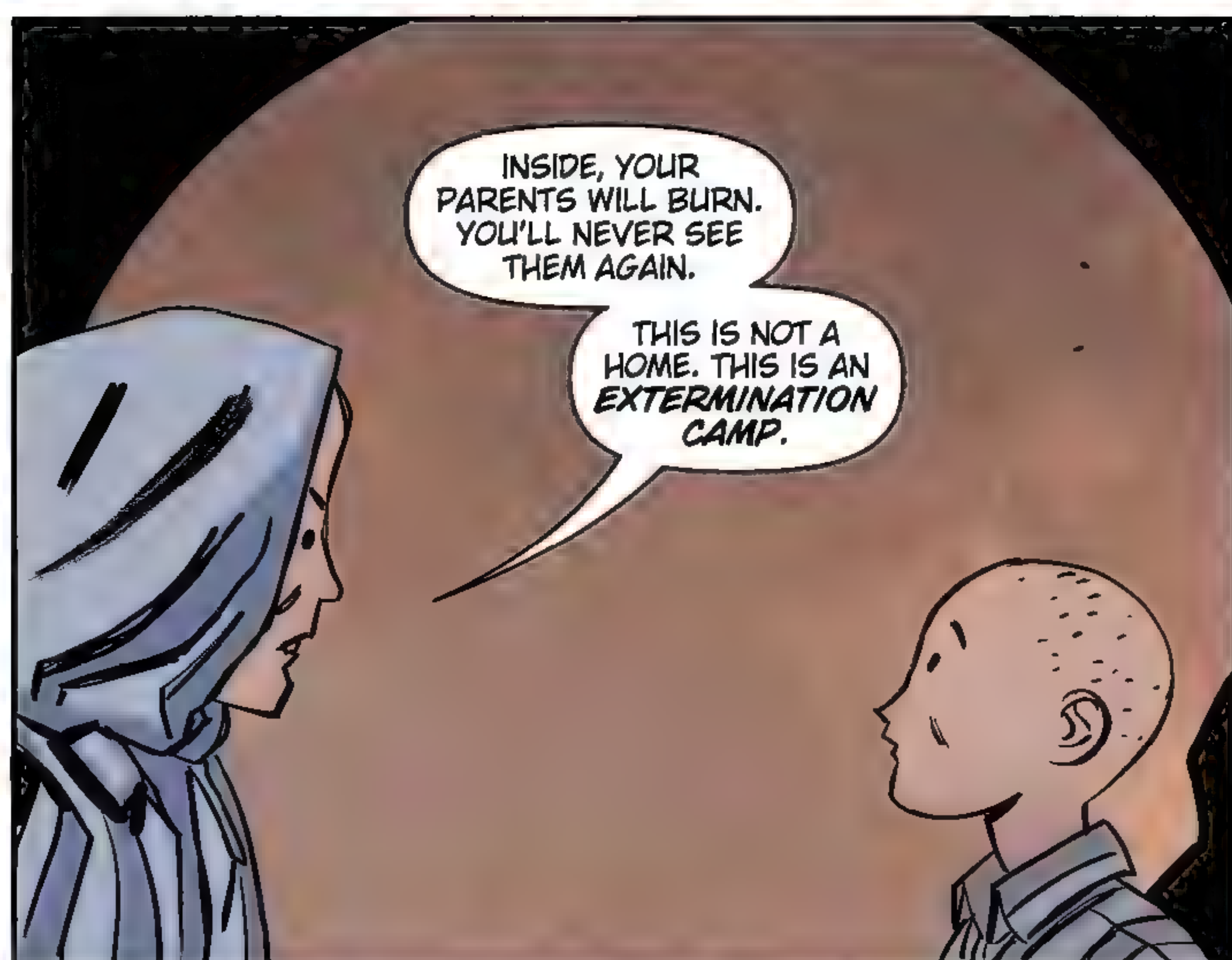


THEY TOOK AWAY THE LAST OF WHAT MADE US HUMAN. WE ALL LOOKED THE SAME. BUT WHERE WAS MY SISTER? I SHOUTED HER NAME DESPERATELY, UNTIL OUR EYES FINALLY MET. SHE TOOK MY HAND AND NEVER LET IT GO.



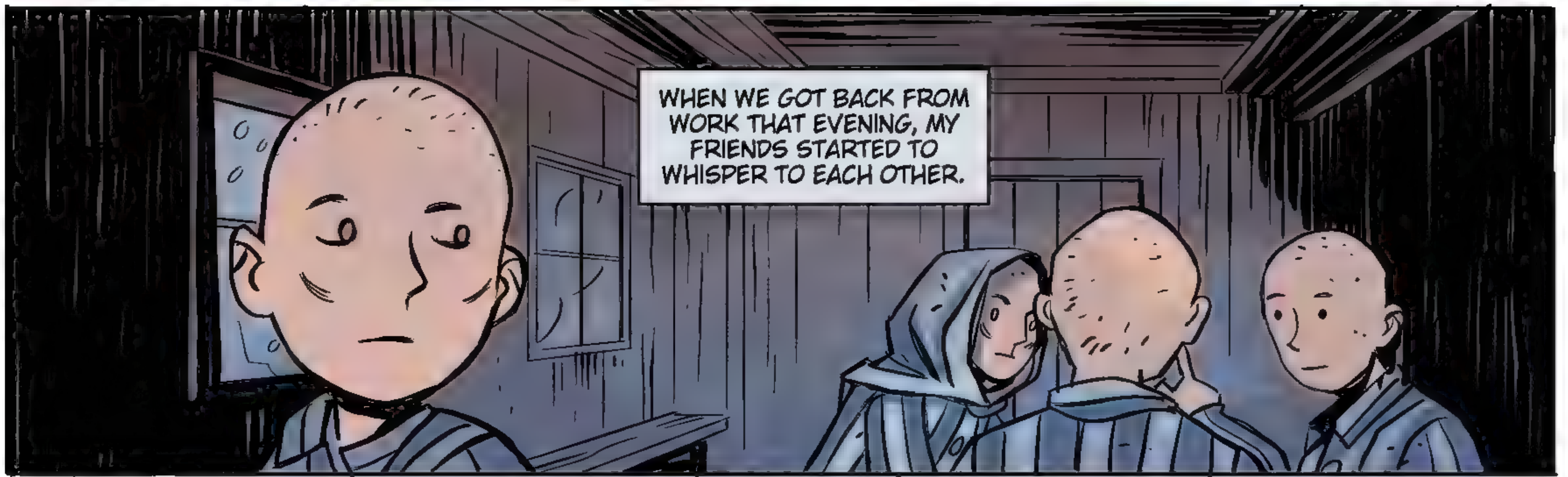
THEY PUSHED US INTO THE COLD WATER OF THE SHOWER ROOMS.



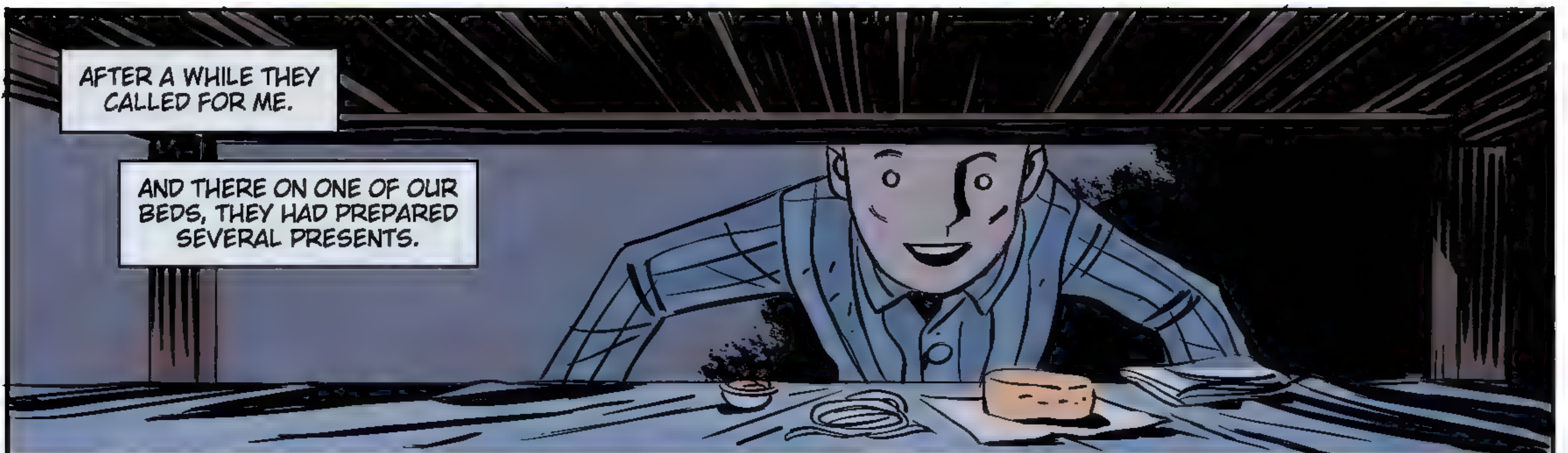




A YEAR PASSED AND I REALIZED, WITH TEARS IN MY EYES, THAT IT WAS MY BIRTHDAY.



WHEN WE GOT BACK FROM WORK THAT EVENING, MY FRIENDS STARTED TO WHISPER TO EACH OTHER.



AFTER A WHILE THEY CALLED FOR ME.

AND THERE ON ONE OF OUR BEDS, THEY HAD PREPARED SEVERAL PRESENTS.



HÉDI GAVE ME A PIECE OF BREAD. SOMEONE ELSE GAVE ME SOME TOILET PAPER AND JAM. ANOTHER ONE GAVE ME A SHOELACE. I STILL HAD MY BLACK BOOTS, BUT HADN'T HAD ANY LACES. FINALLY, I HAD LACES TOO.

I INSISTED ON DIVIDING THE BREAD BETWEEN ALL OF US. IT WAS A MARVELOUS BIRTHDAY.

IN THE SPRING OF 1945, WE KNEW THE GERMANS WERE LOSING THE WAR. THE QUESTION WAS WHETHER WE COULD LIVE TO SEE THE LIBERATION. THEN THE GERMANS CLOSED THE CAMP--WE WERE BEING SENT ELSEWHERE. WE HEARD A RUMOR THAT WE WERE TO BE KILLED. WE BOARDED ANOTHER TRAIN WITH NO IDEA WHERE WE WERE GOING.



THE TRAIN STOPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. LOUD NOISES AND GUNSHOTS CAME FROM THE WOODS. SCARED TO DEATH, WE WAITED IN THE TRAIN CAR, THINKING WE'D BE SHOT IF WE LEFT.

KTHUMM

BOOM

EVENTUALLY THE TRAIN CONTINUED.

BRACKA

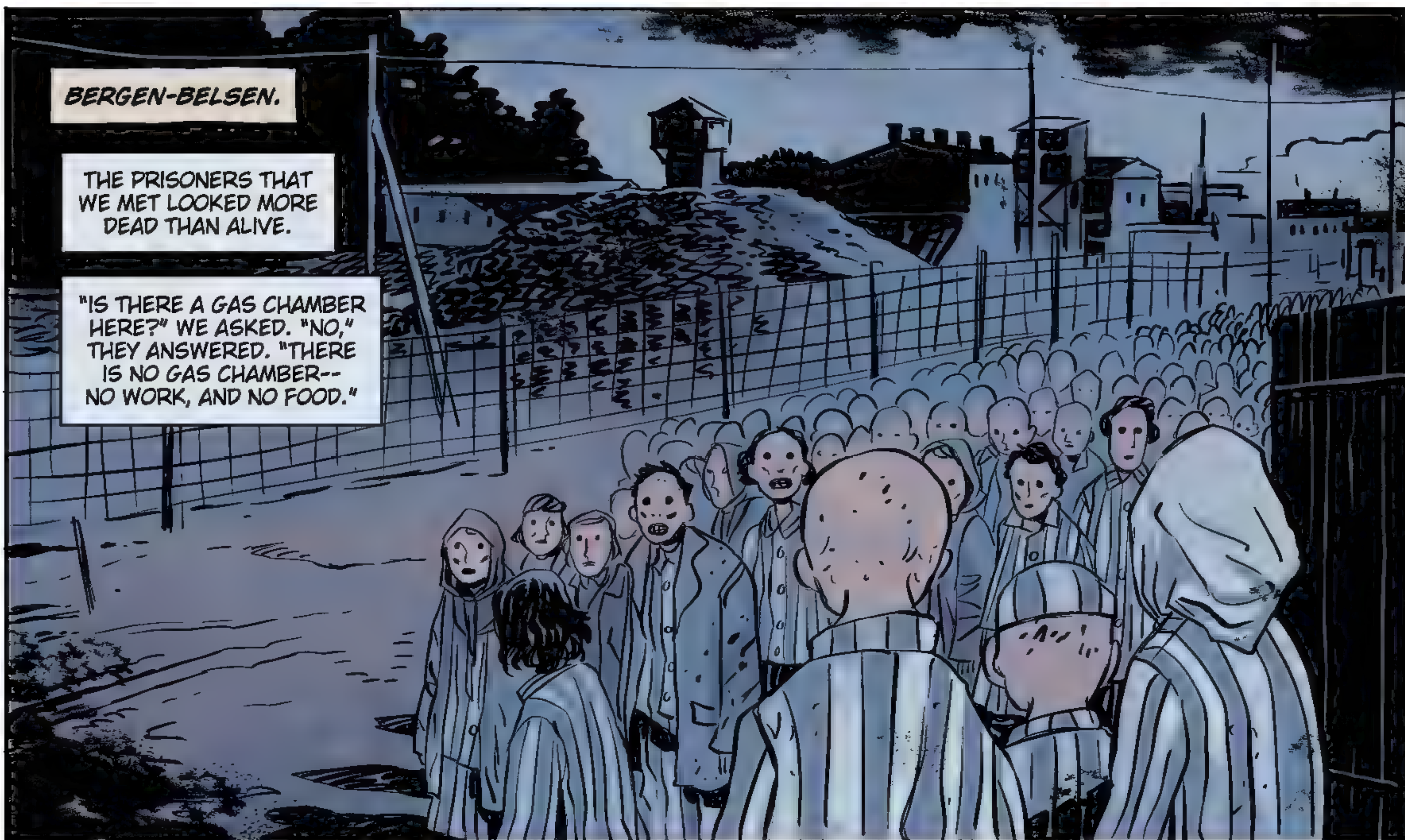
BRACKA

BRACKA

BERGEN-BELSEN.

THE PRISONERS THAT WE MET LOOKED MORE DEAD THAN ALIVE.

"IS THERE A GAS CHAMBER HERE?" WE ASKED. "NO," THEY ANSWERED. "THERE IS NO GAS CHAMBER-- NO WORK, AND NO FOOD."



WE WERE RELIEVED THAT THERE WERE NO GAS CHAMBERS, BUT IT ALSO FELT GOOD TO KNOW THERE WAS NO WORK.

WE GOT TO OUR BARRACK. NOTHING HAPPENED. WE JUST SAT OR LAID ON OUR BUNKS. NO ONE CARED ABOUT US.

THE DAYS PASSED, AND THERE WAS NO FOOD.



WE FOUND SOME WATER IN AN OLD TOILET. WE WOULDN'T HAVE SURVIVED IF WE HADN'T FOUND THAT.



ONE DAY A FRIEND CAME INTO OUR BARRACK.

I SAW FOREIGN SOLDIERS. I THINK THEY'RE ENGLISH.



FROM THE WINDOW, I COULD SEE SOLDIERS IN GREEN UNIFORMS. I WENT OUTSIDE TO SEE IF SHE WAS RIGHT.

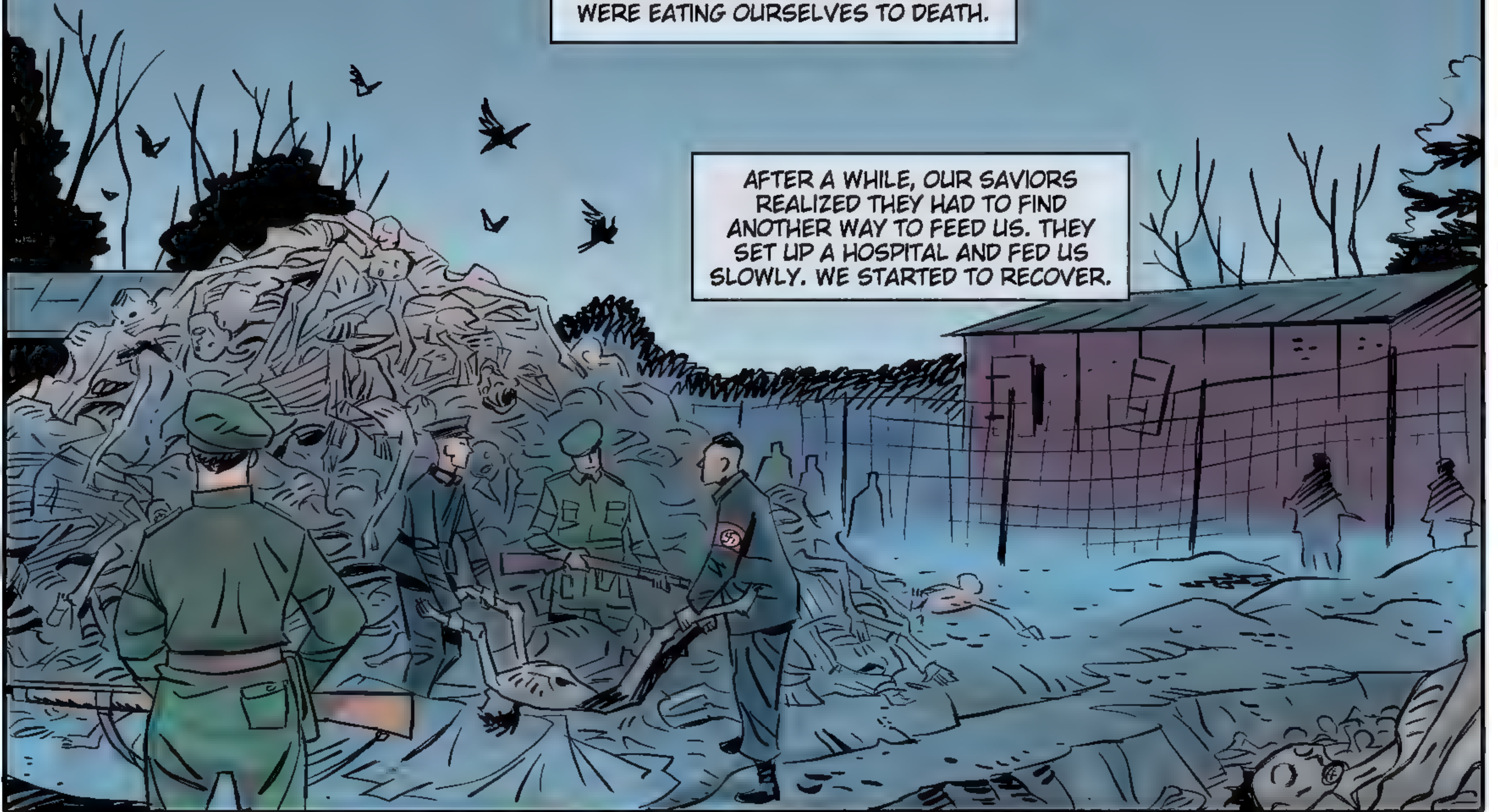


BERGEN-BELSEN WAS LIBERATED BY BRITISH TROOPS.

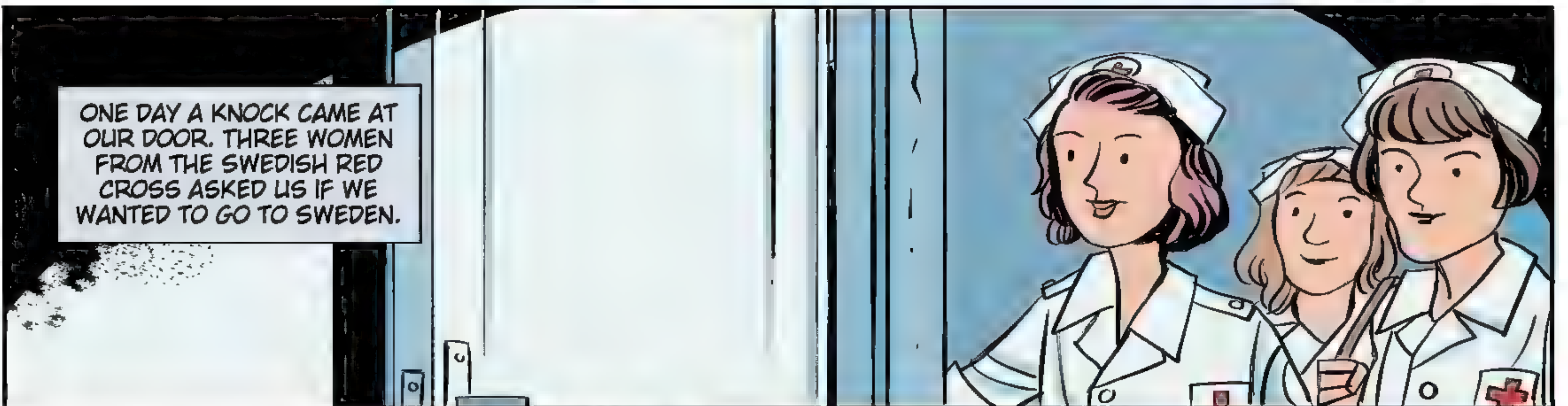
DURING THE LIBERATION, WE DIDN'T CELEBRATE. WE COULDN'T. ALL WE COULD THINK ABOUT WAS FOOD. THE BRITISH WERE SHOCKED BY THE SIGHT OF US. THEY GAVE US CANS OF PEAS, PORK, AND BROWN BEANS.

WE TORE THE CANS OPEN AND POURED THE FOOD INTO OUR MOUTHS. EVERYONE THAT ATE GOT SICK, AND MANY DIED. WE HADN'T HAD ANY FOOD FOR SO LONG THAT SUDDENLY WE WERE EATING OURSELVES TO DEATH.

AFTER A WHILE, OUR SAVIORS REALIZED THEY HAD TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO FEED US. THEY SET UP A HOSPITAL AND FED US SLOWLY. WE STARTED TO RECOVER.



ONE DAY A KNOCK CAME AT OUR DOOR. THREE WOMEN FROM THE SWEDISH RED CROSS ASKED US IF WE WANTED TO GO TO SWEDEN.

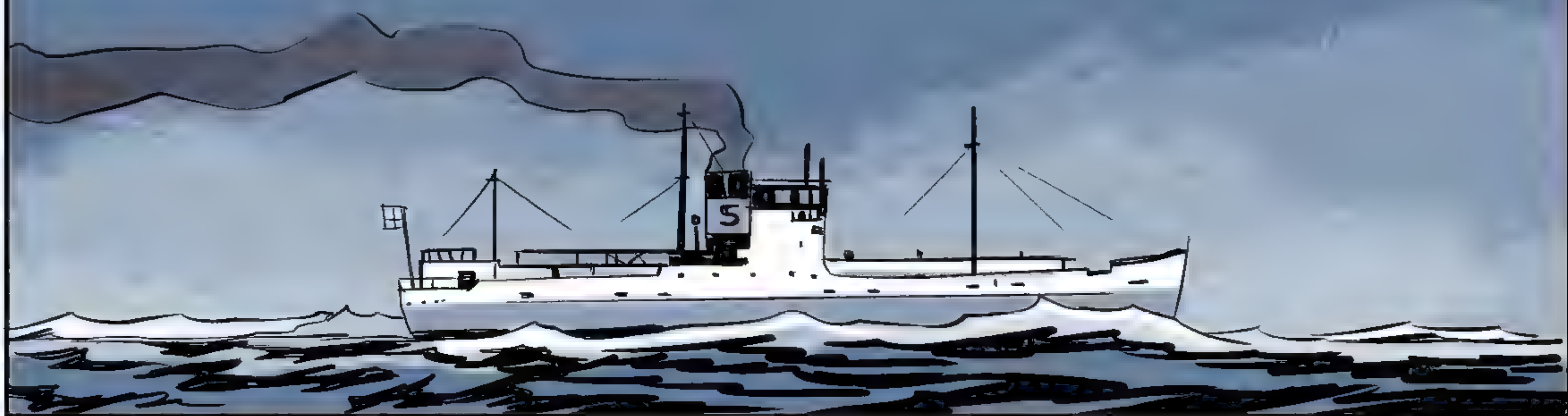


ALL THE SURVIVORS COULD SPEND SIX MONTHS RECOVERING IN SWEDEN. AFTER THAT WE WOULD BE SENT BACK TO OUR OWN COUNTRIES.

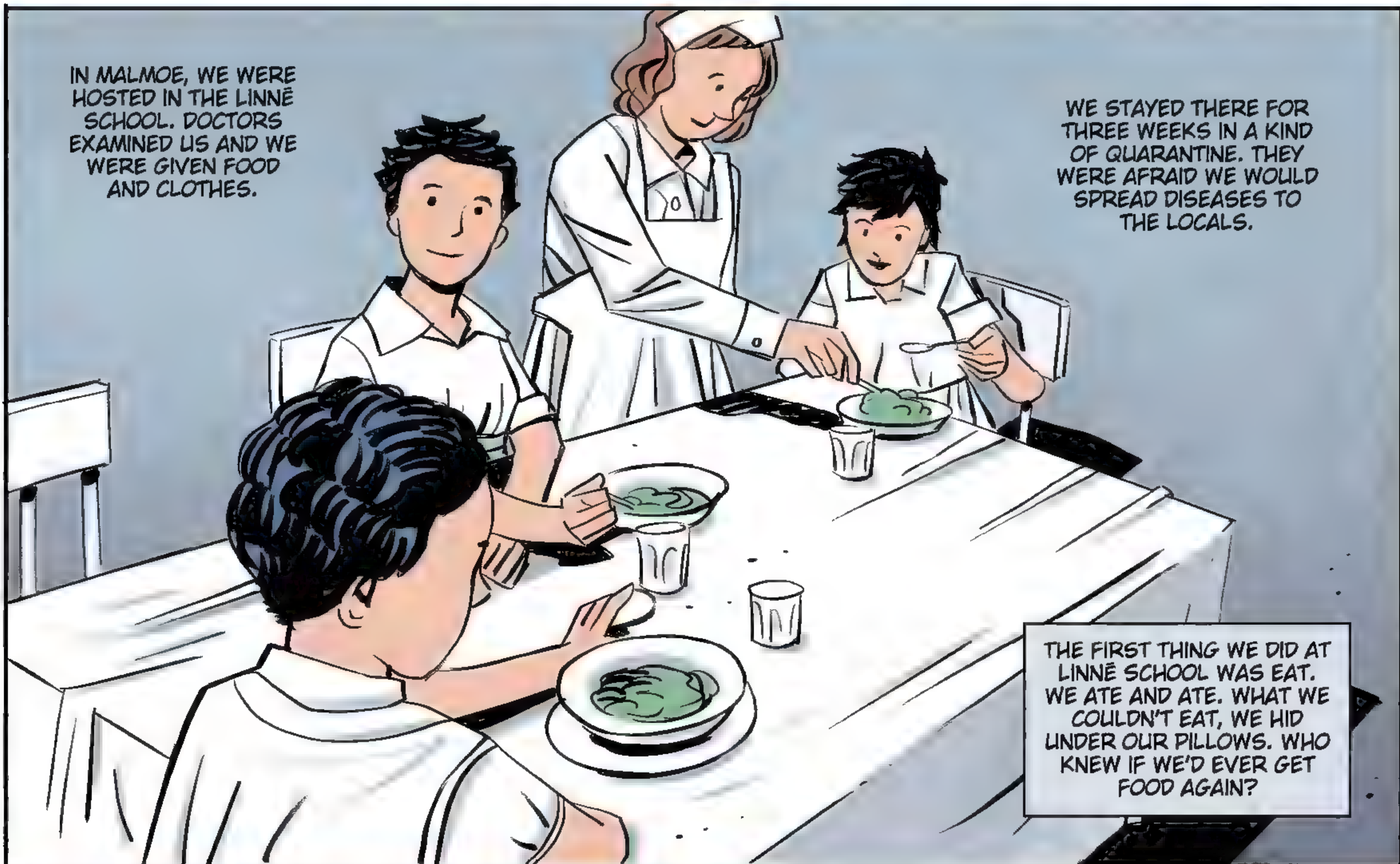
OUR COUSIN SUSSIE, HEDI, AND I HAD PROMISED EACH OTHER WE'D STAY TOGETHER NO MATTER WHAT. WE ALL DECIDED THAT IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.



A SHIP TOOK US TO MALMOE,
WHERE WE STOOD ON SWEDISH
SOIL FOR THE FIRST TIME.



IN MALMOE, WE WERE
HOSTED IN THE LINNÉ
SCHOOL. DOCTORS
EXAMINED US AND WE
WERE GIVEN FOOD
AND CLOTHES.

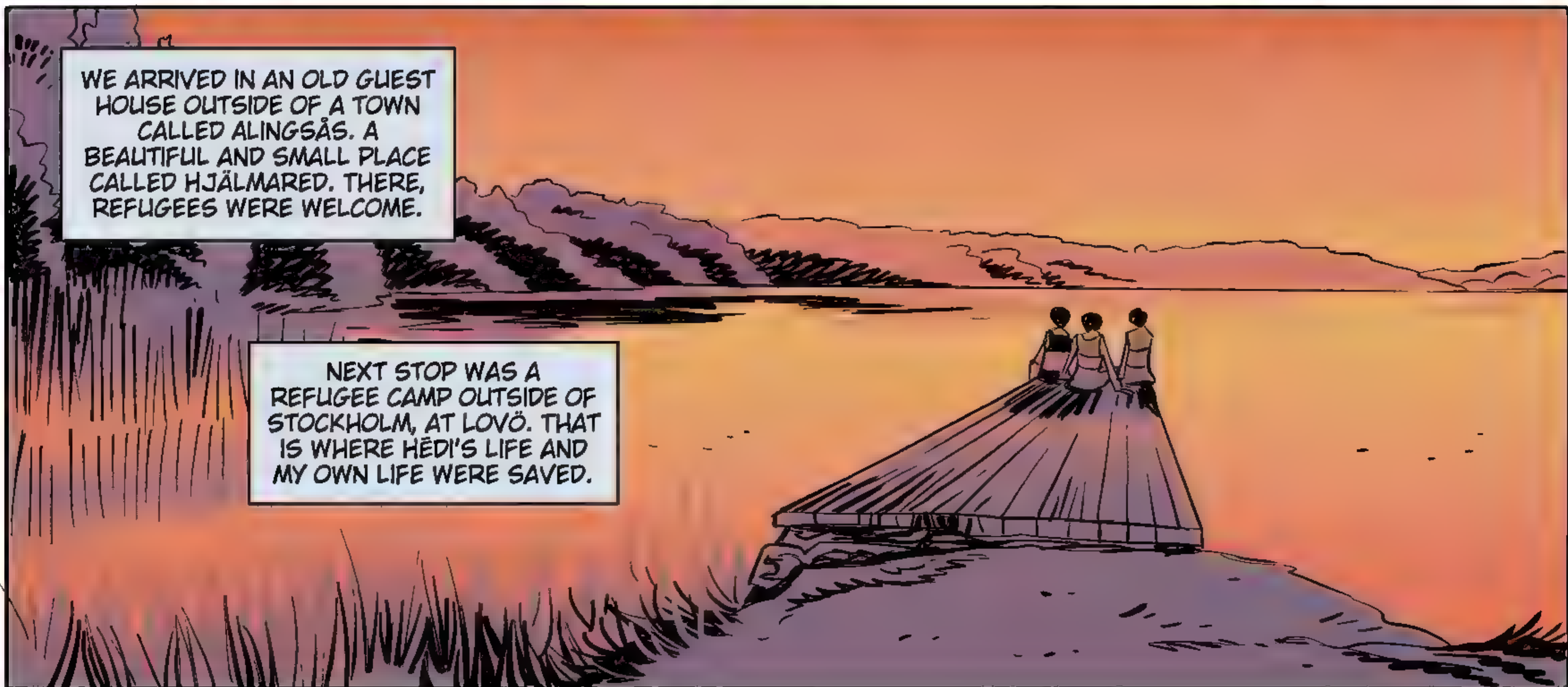


WE STAYED THERE FOR
THREE WEEKS IN A KIND
OF QUARANTINE. THEY
WERE AFRAID WE WOULD
SPREAD DISEASES TO
THE LOCALS.

THE FIRST THING WE DID AT
LINNÉ SCHOOL WAS EAT.
WE ATE AND ATE. WHAT WE
COULDN'T EAT, WE HID
UNDER OUR PILLOWS. WHO
KNEW IF WE'D EVER GET
FOOD AGAIN?

WE ARRIVED IN AN OLD GUEST
HOUSE OUTSIDE OF A TOWN
CALLED ALINGSÅS. A
BEAUTIFUL AND SMALL PLACE
CALLED HJÄLMARED. THERE,
REFUGEES WERE WELCOME.

NEXT STOP WAS A
REFUGEE CAMP OUTSIDE OF
STOCKHOLM, AT LOVÖ. THAT
IS WHERE HEDI'S LIFE AND
MY OWN LIFE WERE SAVED.



IN STOCKHOLM I MET HANS
FRÄNKEL. THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY HAD ARRANGED
A DANCE FOR THE YOUTH.

I WORE A RED DRESS.
WHEN HANS LAID EYES ON
ME, HE TOLD HIS FRIEND,
"I'M GOING TO MARRY HER."



AND THAT'S
WHAT HE DID.



Livia Fränkel lives in Stockholm. She has three children, six grandchildren, and five great grandchildren. For many years, Livia has worked for the Survivors of the Holocaust Association and is often in schools, telling her story. In 1992, Livia's sister Hédi published a book telling the story of their experiences during the war.

I WAS BORN IN FRANKFURT,
GERMANY. MY DAD WAS A
GOLDSMITH AND HE OWNED
HIS OWN JEWELRY SHOP.

WE WERE LIVING IN LODZ
WHEN THE GERMANS
ATTACKED POLAND.

Selma

ONE YEAR AFTER THE CRYSTAL
NIGHT, THE GERMANS CAME AND
BURNED ALL OF THE SYNAGOGUES
IN LODZ TO THE GROUND.

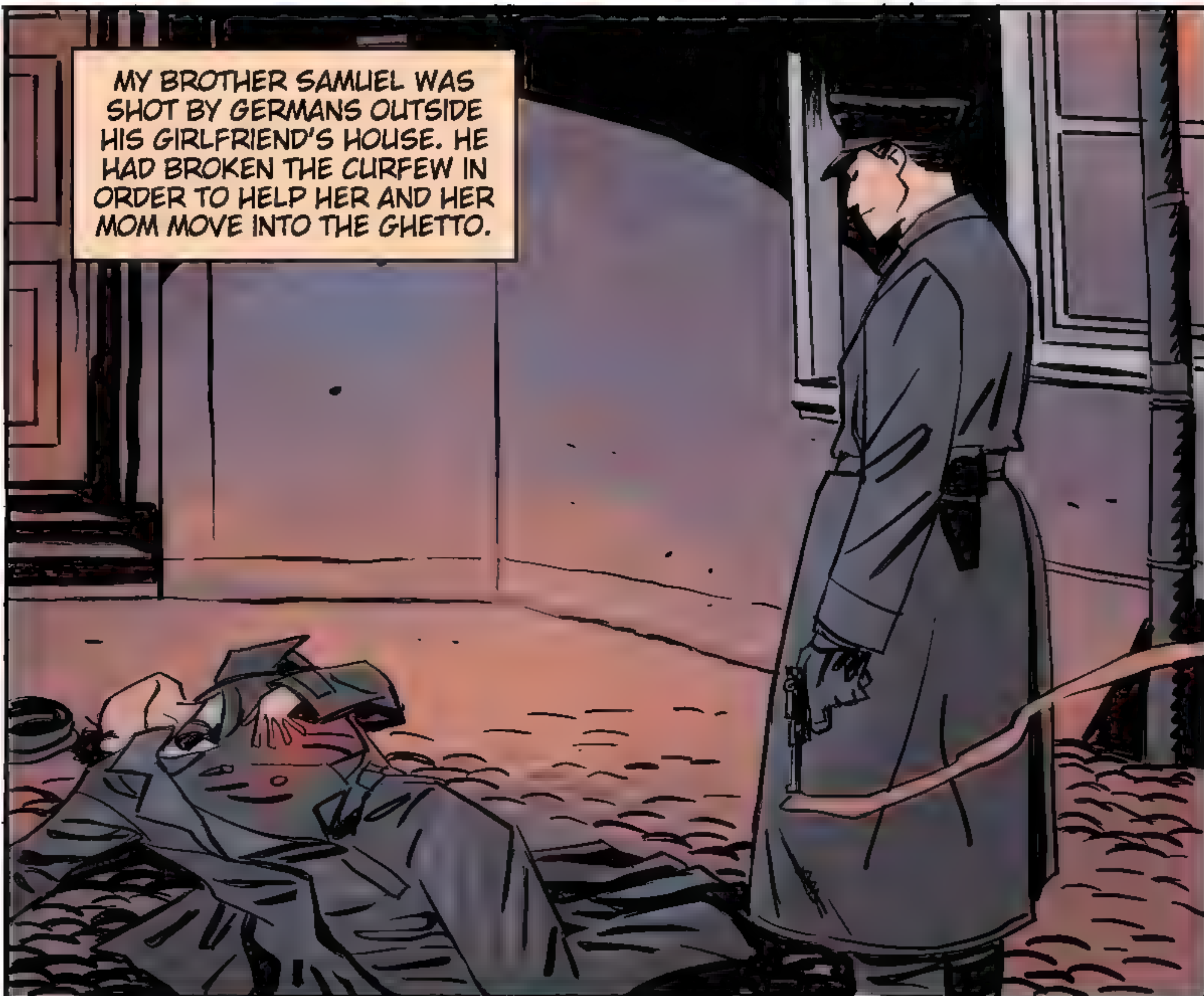
THEY TOLD US THAT ALL
OF THE JEWS HAD TO BE
GATHERED TOGETHER IN
ONE PLACE.



WE SEARCHED FOR A PLACE TO STAY. THE GERMANS WENT FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE TO TRY AND SPEED UP THEIR SORTING PROCESS.



FOR EVERY FAMILY THAT HADN'T LEFT THEIR HOMES YET, THE GERMANS WOULD SHOOT EITHER THE FATHER OR THE ELDEST SON TO DEATH. THE REST OF THE FAMILY WOULD BE FORCED AWAY WHILE THE DEAD WERE LEFT LYING IN THE STREET.



MY BROTHER SAMUEL WAS SHOT BY GERMANS OUTSIDE HIS GIRLFRIEND'S HOUSE. HE HAD BROKEN THE CURFEW IN ORDER TO HELP HER AND HER MOM MOVE INTO THE GHETTO.

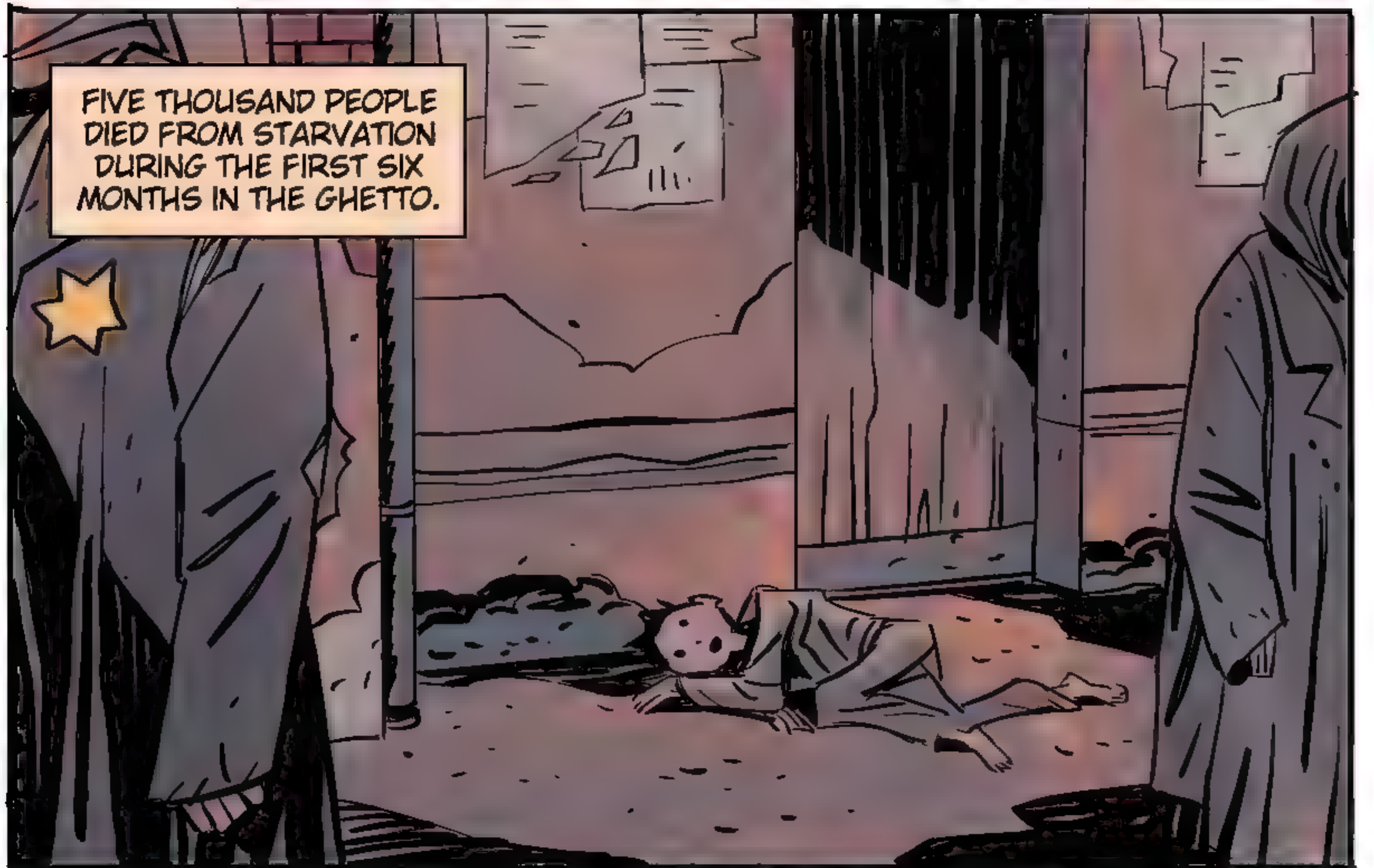


WE MOVED INTO THE GHETTO A FEW DAYS LATER.

WE HAD TO PAY FOR THE BARBED WIRE FENCES AND THE WALLS THAT SURROUNDED THE GHETTO. ON MAY 1, THE GERMANS SEALED THE GHETTO, AND WE COULDN'T LEAVE.



THERE WAS NO FOOD. WE WERE STARVING.



FIVE THOUSAND PEOPLE DIED FROM STARVATION DURING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS IN THE GHETTO.



MY SISTER ANNA WAS CAPTURED ON THE STREET.

WE SPENT A LONG TIME LOOKING FOR HER, BUT MUCH LATER, WE FOUND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED.



MY DAD WORKED IN THE WOOD INDUSTRY, SO I STARTED TO WORK ALONGSIDE HIM. WE TOOK THE WORKERS TO AND FROM THE FIELD. IT WAS A LONG TRIP.

ONE DAY AS I WAS LEAVING WORK, I COULDN'T FIND MY DAD. SOMEONE TOLD ME HE HAD FAINTED AND THAT MOM HAD TO DRAG HIM HOME ON A WAGON.

TWO WEEKS LATER, HE DIED FROM STARVATION.



DURING THE HIGH HOLIDAYS THE GERMANS ANNOUNCED A CURFEW. WE WERE SO DEVASTATED THAT WE COULDN'T EVEN GATHER IN THE LITTLE FREE TIME THAT WE HAD. A RUMOR SPREAD THAT ALL THE SICK PEOPLE, THE ELDERLY, AND THE CHILDREN WOULD BE SENT AWAY. ORPHANAGES, OLD FOLKS' HOMES, AND HOSPITALS WERE ALL CLEARED OUT. IT WAS HORRIFYING. I WAS SO SCARED.

MY MOM WAS TAKEN, BUT LUCKILY SHE ESCAPED. SHE HID IN A CELLAR ALL NIGHT AND SNUCK BACK TO US IN THE MORNING.

BY AUGUST, ONLY A FRACTION OF THE THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND PEOPLE IN THE GHETTO WAS LEFT. THE OFFICERS TOLD US THAT WE'D BE MOVED SOMEWHERE ELSE. MY MOM, MY SISTER PAULA, AND I WENT TO THE STATION.

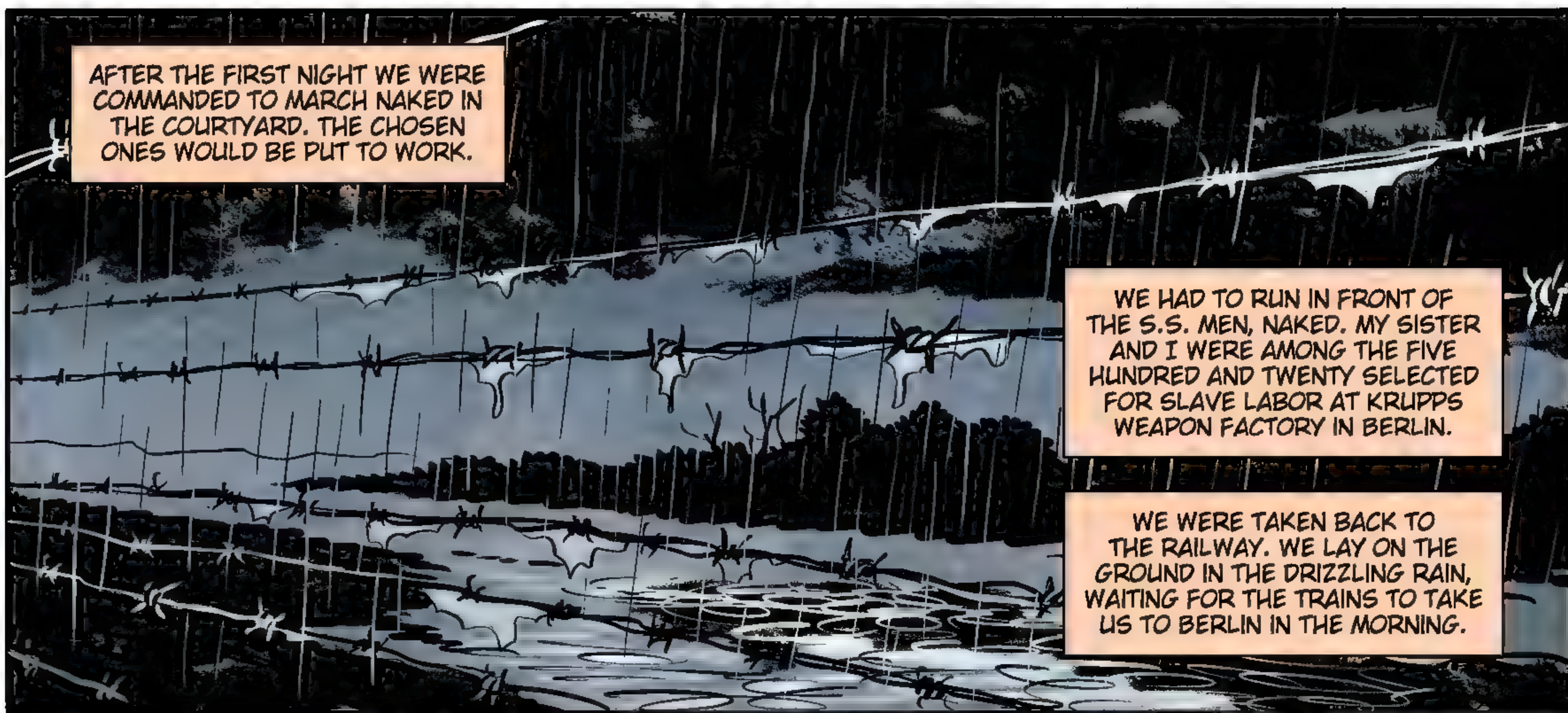
WE CARRIED OUR THINGS IN RUCKSACKS. THE NEXT MORNING, WE WERE LOADED ONTO A TRAIN, AND TRAVELED ALL DAY. THE RAILWAY TRACK HAD BEEN DAMAGED BY BOMBS. AT NIGHT THE TRAIN STOOD STILL BY THE SIDE OF THE TRACKS.

IN THE MORNING WE ARRIVED AT A RAILWAY YARD, IN A CHAOS OF COMMANDER'S ROARS, WHISTLES, AND OUR OWN SCREAMS. PRISONERS IN STRIPED CLOTHES SEPARATED THE MEN FROM THE WOMEN.

THEY BROUGHT US TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE CAMP. HE POINTED TO THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT WITH HIS LEATHER WHIP. PLAYFULLY AND CALMLY, HE DECIDED WHO LIVED AND WHO DIED.



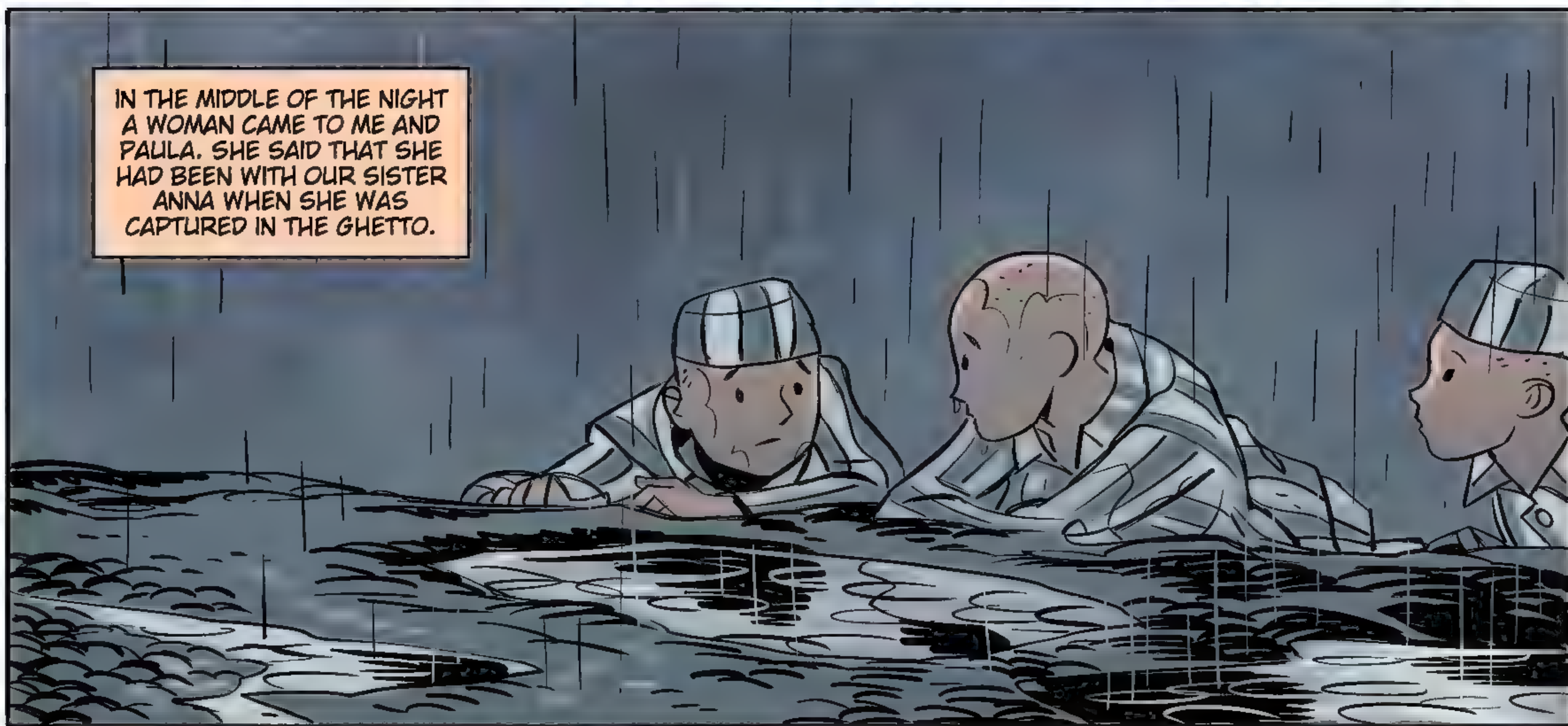
HE CHOSE MY MOM AND KILLED HER ALONG WITH THOUSANDS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN THAT DAY.



AFTER THE FIRST NIGHT WE WERE
COMMANDED TO MARCH NAKED IN
THE COURTYARD. THE CHOSEN
ONES WOULD BE PUT TO WORK.

WE HAD TO RUN IN FRONT OF
THE S.S. MEN, NAKED. MY SISTER
AND I WERE AMONG THE FIVE
HUNDRED AND TWENTY SELECTED
FOR SLAVE LABOR AT KRUPPS
WEAPON FACTORY IN BERLIN.

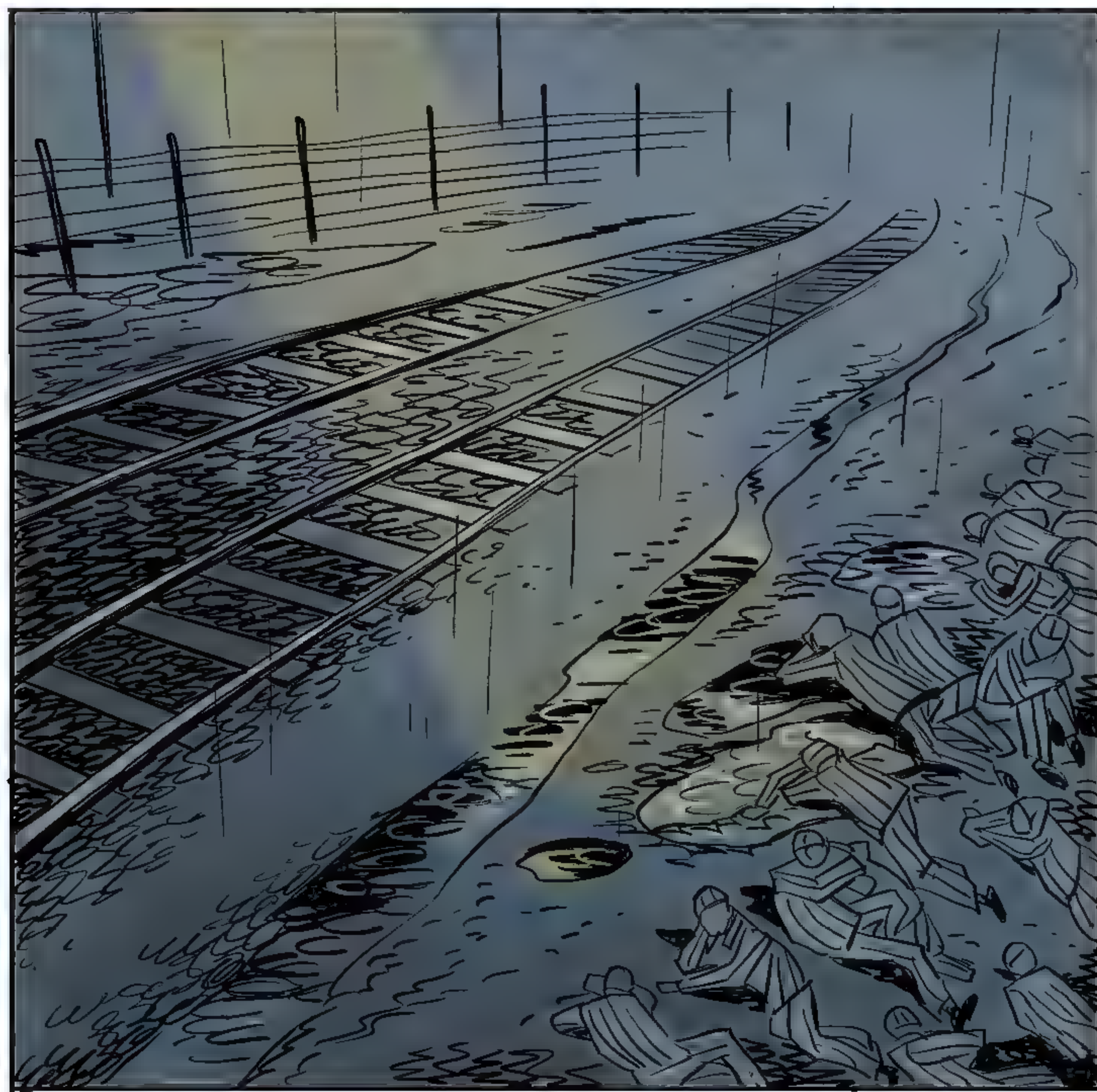
WE WERE TAKEN BACK TO
THE RAILWAY. WE LAY ON THE
GROUND IN THE DRIZZLING RAIN,
WAITING FOR THE TRAINS TO TAKE
US TO BERLIN IN THE MORNING.



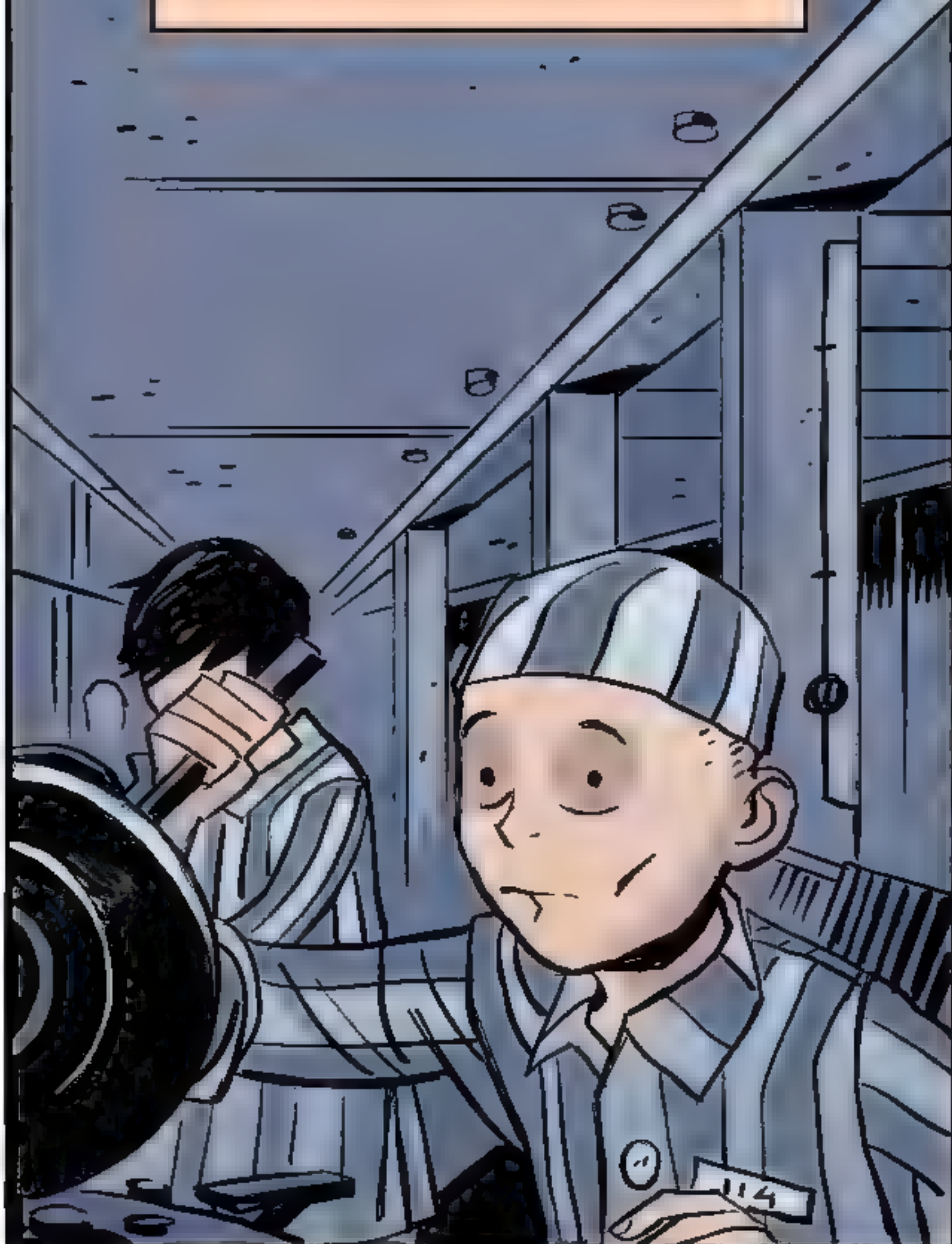
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT
A WOMAN CAME TO ME AND
PAULA. SHE SAID THAT SHE
HAD BEEN WITH OUR SISTER
ANNA WHEN SHE WAS
CAPTURED IN THE GHETTO.



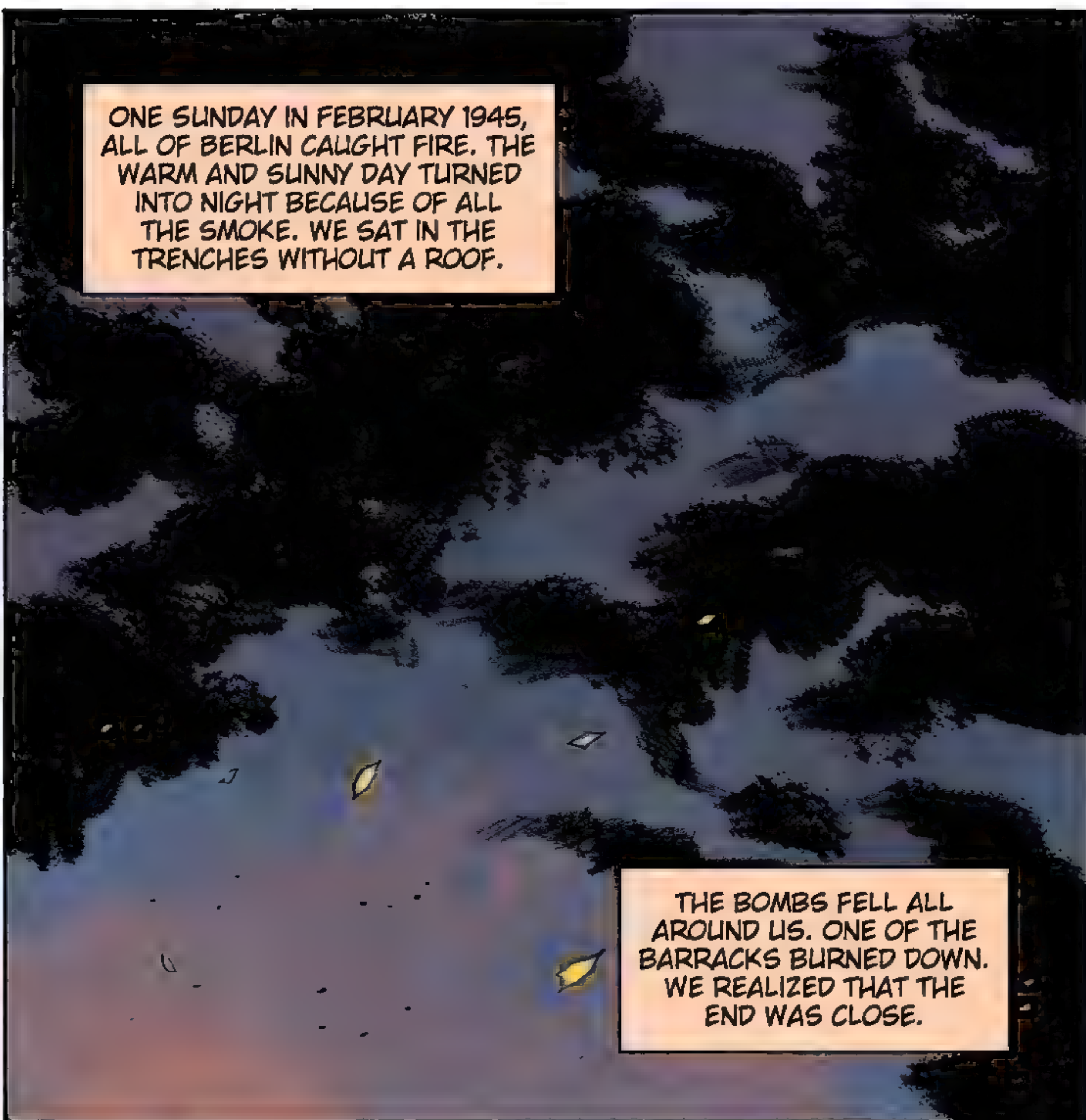
ANNA WAS
NOT ALIVE.



DURING THE FIRST TWO WEEKS IN BERLIN, WE WERE KEPT IN QUARANTINE. AFTER THAT WE STARTED WORKING AT KRUPPS. MY SLAVE NUMBER WAS ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEEN. PAULA'S WAS ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN.



ONE SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY 1945, ALL OF BERLIN CAUGHT FIRE. THE WARM AND SUNNY DAY TURNED INTO NIGHT BECAUSE OF ALL THE SMOKE. WE SAT IN THE TRENCHES WITHOUT A ROOF.

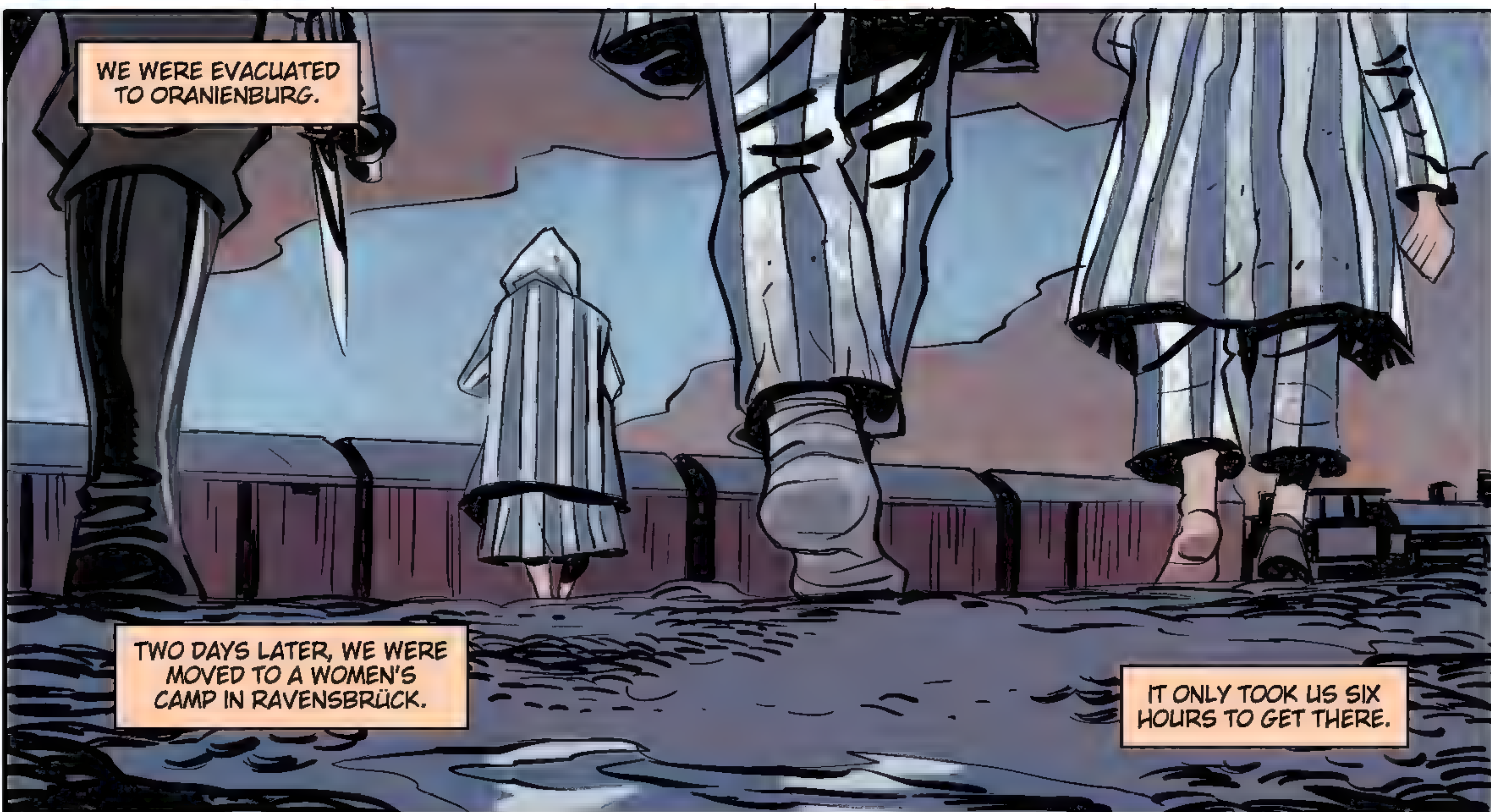


THE BOMBS FELL ALL AROUND US. ONE OF THE BARRACKS BURNED DOWN. WE REALIZED THAT THE END WAS CLOSE.

THE RUSSIANS WERE CLOSING IN ON BERLIN.



WE WERE EVACUATED TO ORANIENBURG.

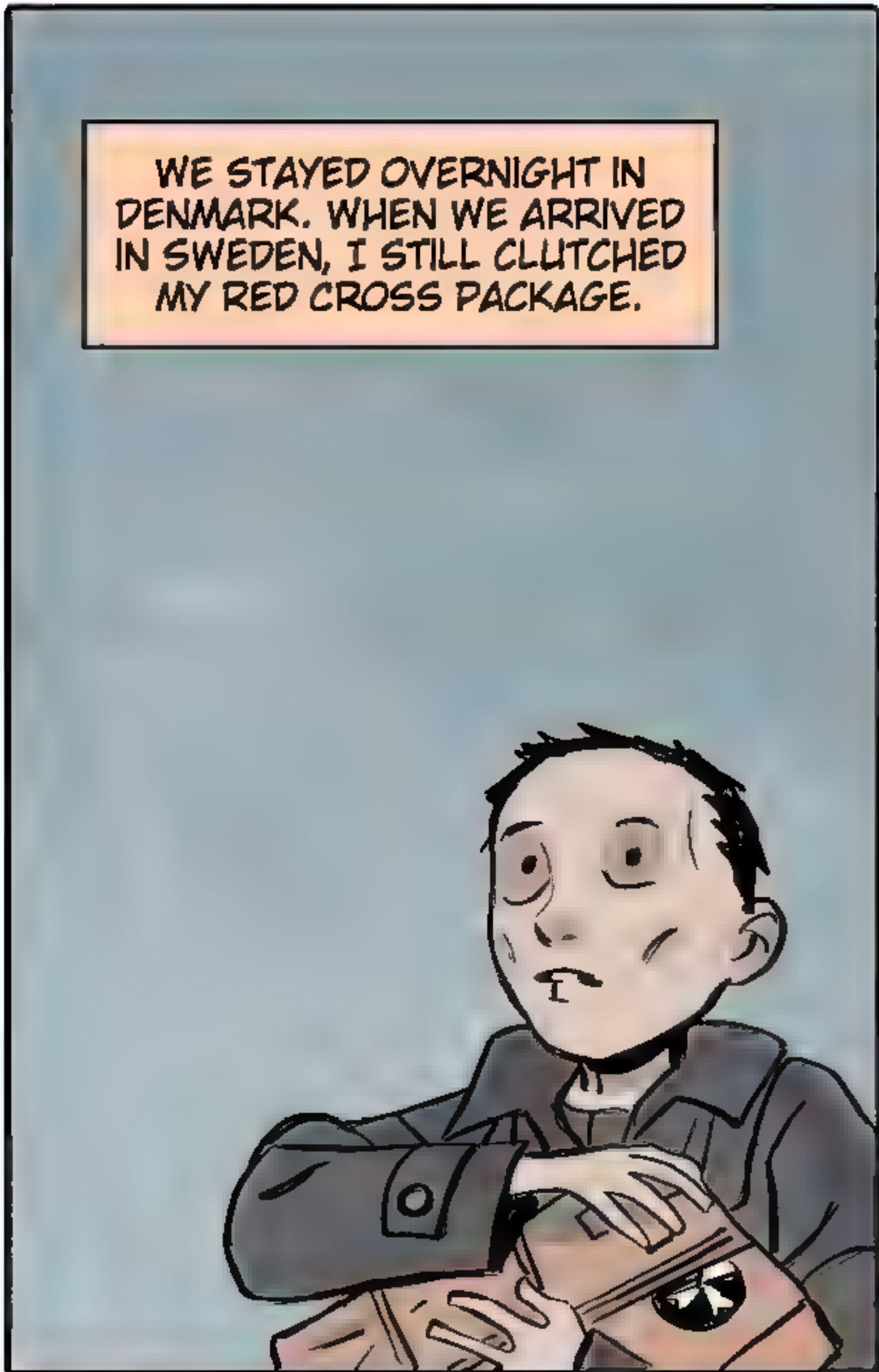


TWO DAYS LATER, WE WERE MOVED TO A WOMEN'S CAMP IN RAVENSBRÜCK.

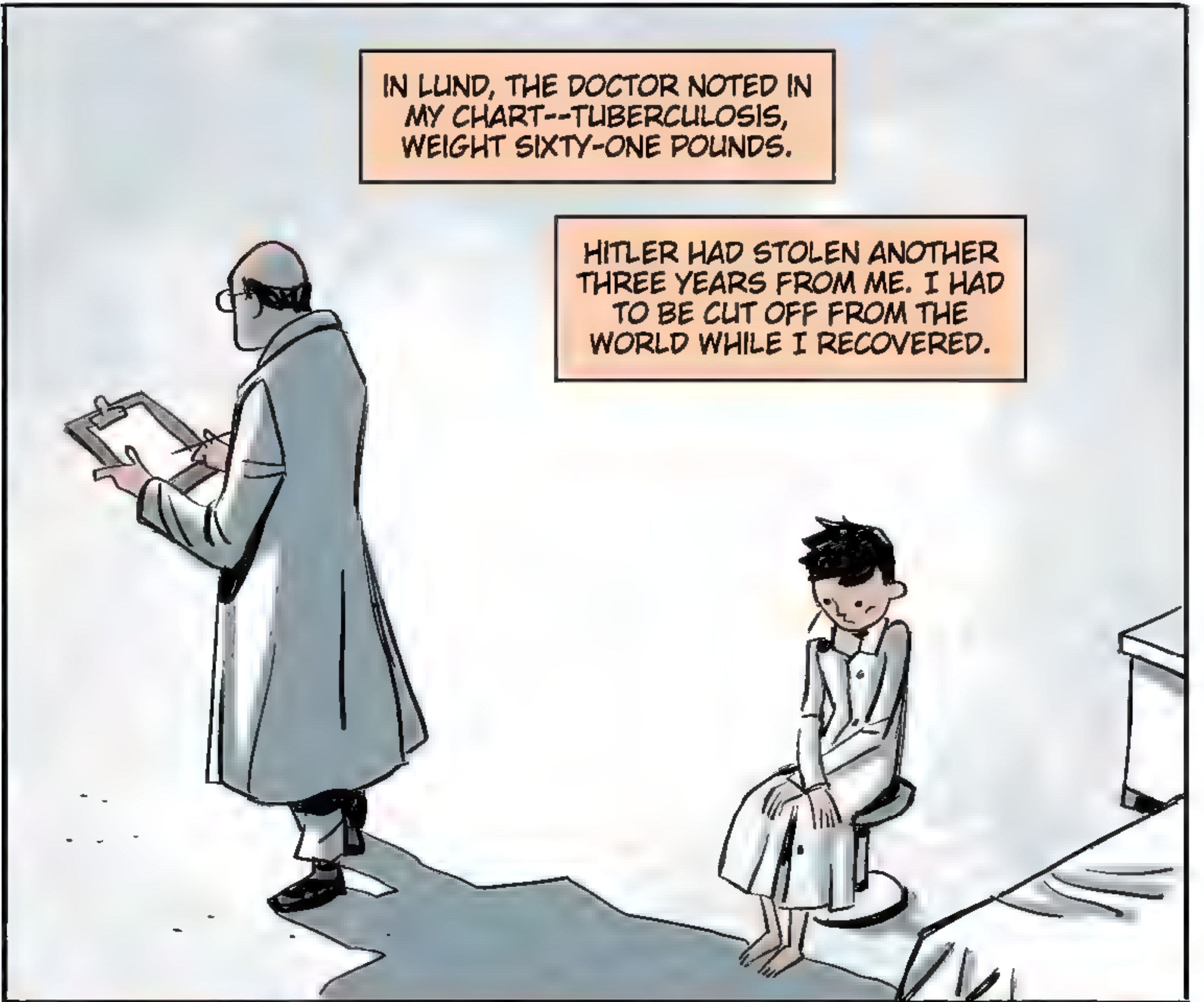
IT ONLY TOOK US SIX HOURS TO GET THERE.



I FELL APART WHEN I SAW
THE RED CROSS BUSES.

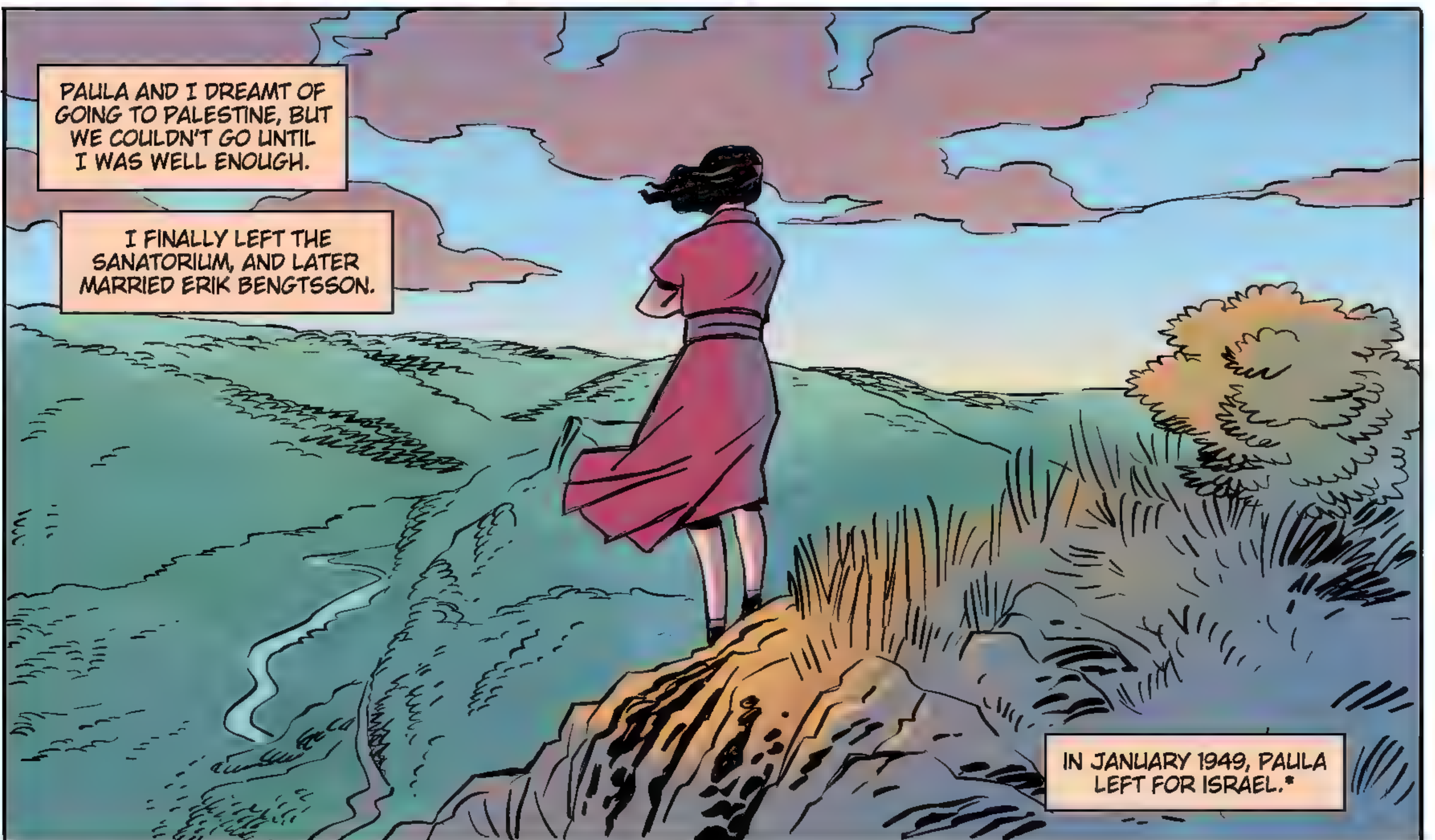


WE STAYED OVERNIGHT IN
DENMARK. WHEN WE ARRIVED
IN SWEDEN, I STILL CLUTCHED
MY RED CROSS PACKAGE.



IN LUND, THE DOCTOR NOTED IN
MY CHART--TUBERCULOSIS,
WEIGHT SIXTY-ONE POUNDS.

HITLER HAD STOLEN ANOTHER
THREE YEARS FROM ME. I HAD
TO BE CUT OFF FROM THE
WORLD WHILE I RECOVERED.



PAULA AND I DREAMT OF
GOING TO PALESTINE, BUT
WE COULDN'T GO UNTIL
I WAS WELL ENOUGH.

I FINALLY LEFT THE
SANATORIUM, AND LATER
MARRIED ERIK BENGTTSSON.

IN JANUARY 1949, PAULA
LEFT FOR ISRAEL.*

*THE STATE OF ISRAEL WAS ANNOUNCED IN 1948

FROM OUR LARGE FAMILY,
PAULA AND I WERE THE
ONLY TWO SURVIVORS.





After leaving the sanatorium outside Varberg, **Selma Bengtsson** stayed in Varberg for the rest of her life. Together with her husband Erik, Selma had a son and many grandchildren. Selma and her family remained close to her sister Paula and her family in Israel.

MAKÓ,
SOUTHEASTERN
HUNGARY.

MY MUM AND DAD RAN A
SMALL GROCERY STORE.
WE SPENT ALMOST ALL
OUR TIME IN THE STORE
AND THE LITTLE KITCHEN.

MY FAMILY WAS POOR. WE
LIVED ON WHAT LITTLE WE
HAD. WE DIDN'T HAVE A
RADIO OR A TELEPHONE.

Susanna



ALL OF THE NEWSPAPERS IN
HUNGARY WERE CENSORED THEN.
YOU HAD TO READ BETWEEN THE
LINES AND TRY TO GUESS WHAT
WAS ACTUALLY GOING ON IN
EUROPE.

WE HAD A TEACHER THAT HATED US BECAUSE WE WERE JEWISH. SHE MADE US WRITE OUR ESSAYS ON SATURDAYS. TO ME THAT WASN'T A PROBLEM-- MY FAMILY WASN'T RELIGIOUS AND WE DIDN'T CELEBRATE SHABBAT OR ANY OTHER JEWISH HOLIDAYS.



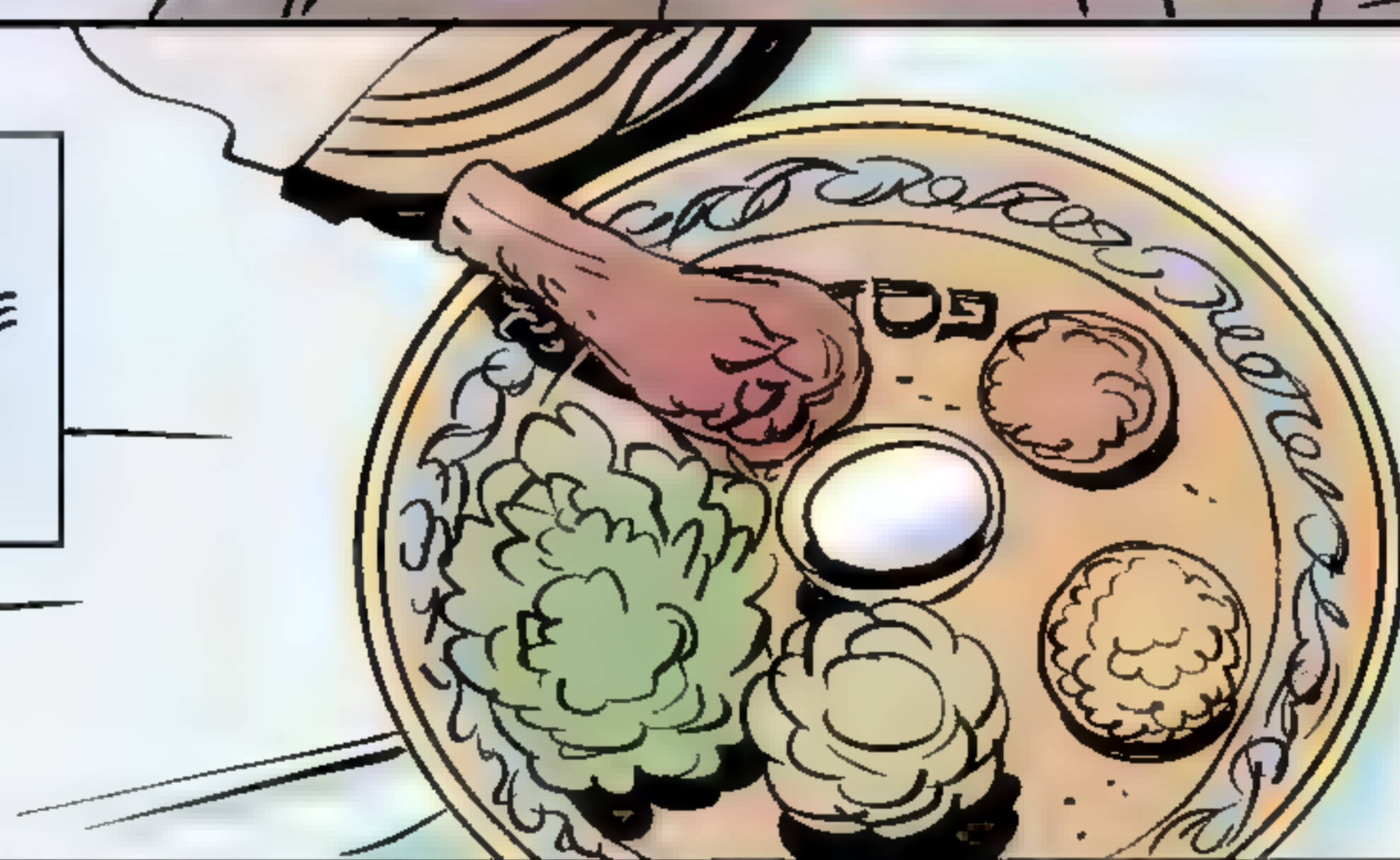
THROUGHOUT THE SPRING SEMESTER, THE TEACHER EXPLAINED WHERE THE GERMANS WERE. SHE ADDED, "THEY'LL BE HERE SOON AND WE'LL GET RID OF ALL THE JEWS." SHE REPEATED THAT TO US EVERY LESSON.



WE HEARD THAT ALL JEWS IN MAKÓ HAD BEEN ORDERED TO MOVE TO TWO DIFFERENT, WORN-DOWN GHETTOS IN THE TOWN.



MY DAD WANTED US TO RENT A ROOM AT THE OLD FOLKS' HOME. THERE WAS ONE AVAILABLE THERE AND IT WOULD BE CHEAPER FOR US.



MY DAD, MUM, AND I WERE INVITED TO CELEBRATE PASSOVER AT THE DIRECTOR'S HOME. THAT MEANT A LOT TO ME. AT HOME, WE NEVER CELEBRATED THE JEWISH HOLIDAYS.



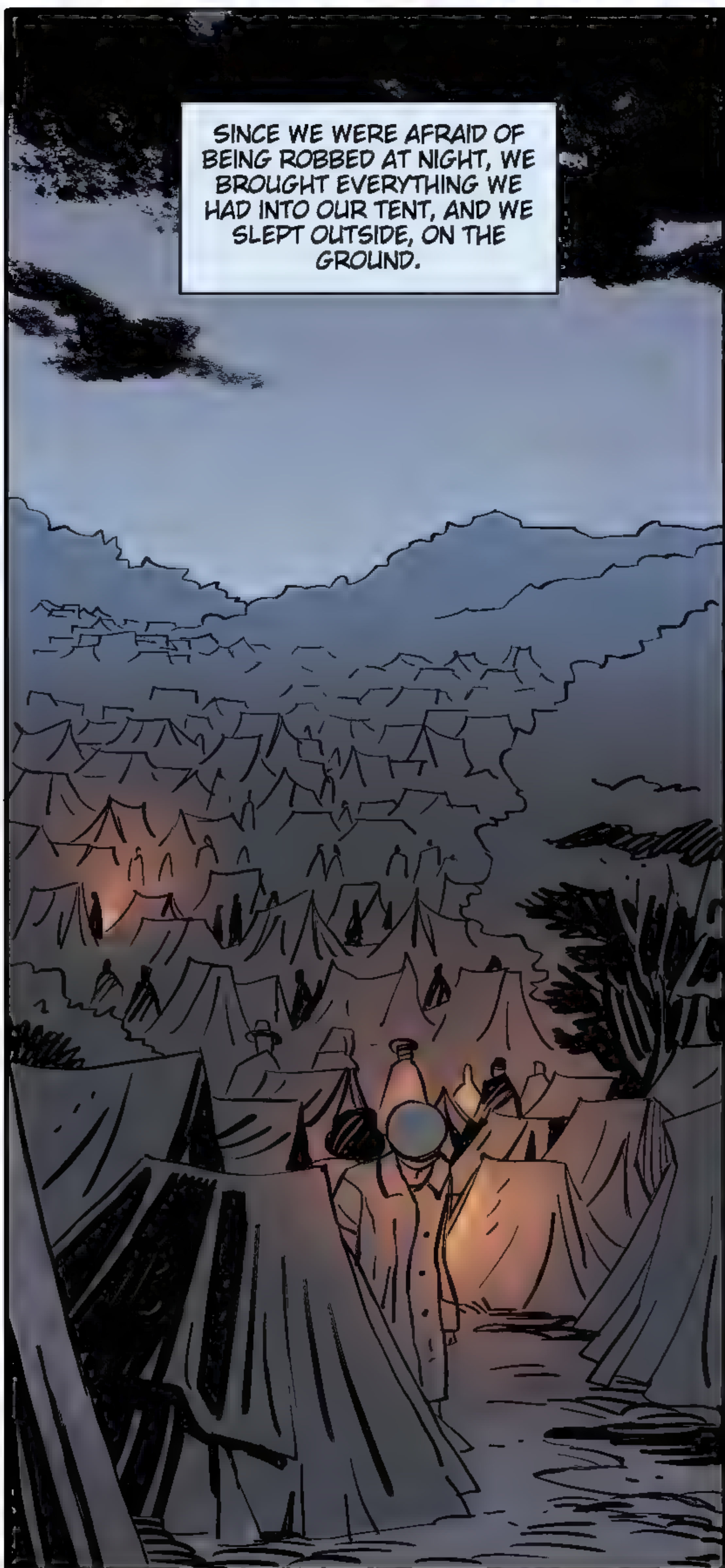
THE DIRECTOR AND HIS FAMILY HAD ARRIVED IN HUNGARY FROM ROMANIA. BUT ONE DAY, THEY WERE JUST GONE.



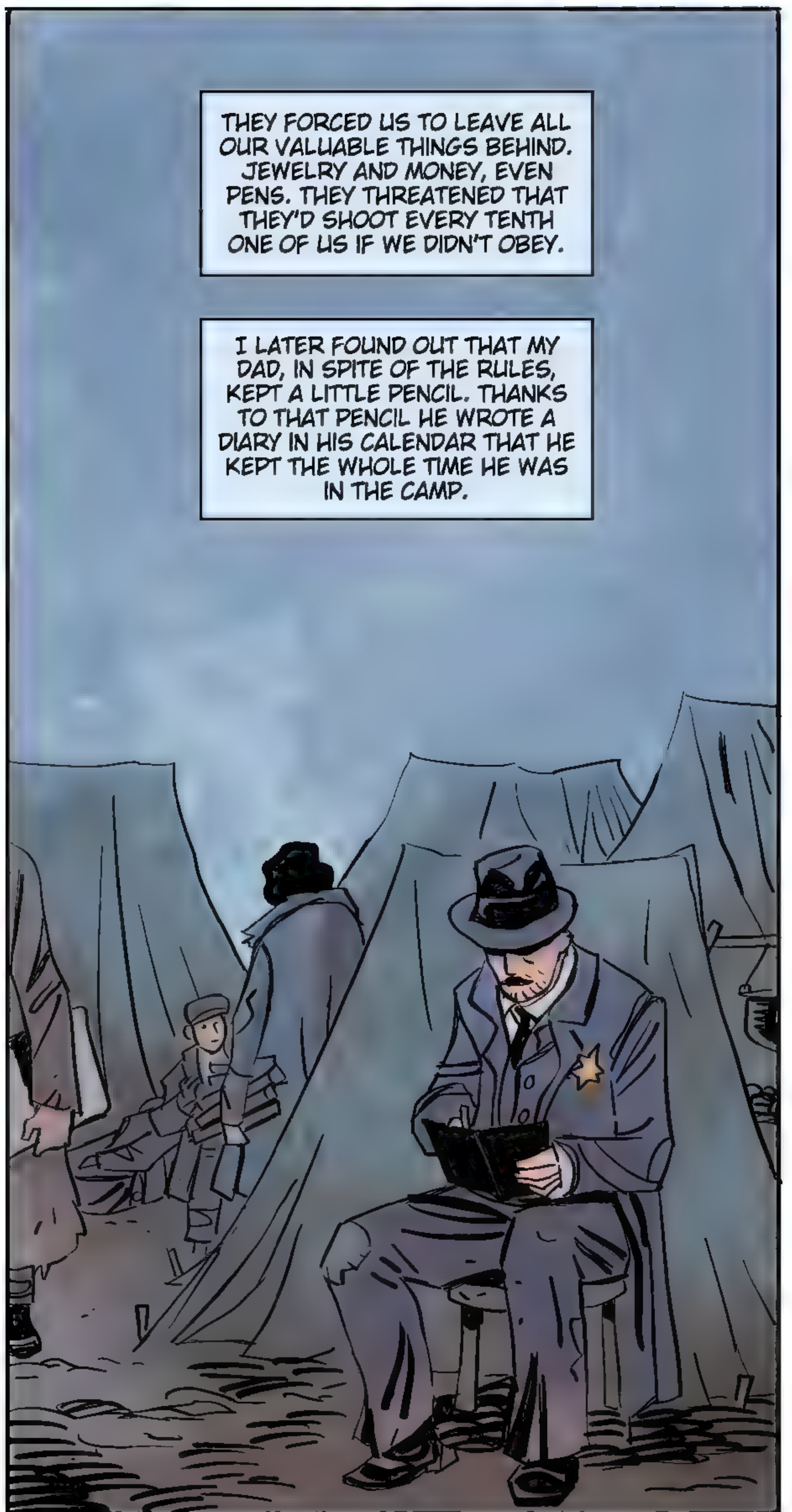
WE FOUND OUT THAT ALL JEWS WITHOUT HUNGARIAN CITIZENSHIP WERE TO BE DEPORTED. THEN MILITARY POLICE BANGED ON OUR DOOR AND YELLED THAT WE HAD TO PACK UP AND BRING ENOUGH FOOD FOR A THREE-DAY TRIP.

MY MUM IMMEDIATELY STARTED BOILING EGGS. EGGS WERE EASY TO KEEP GOOD IN THE SUMMER HEAT. WE PACKED SOME BED LINEN, CLOTHES, AND COOKING UTENSILS.

WE WERE TAKEN ON TRUCKS TO SZEGED, THE SECOND LARGEST TOWN IN HUNGARY. THEY PUT US IN A TENT CAMP IN THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY.



SINCE WE WERE AFRAID OF BEING ROBBED AT NIGHT, WE BROUGHT EVERYTHING WE HAD INTO OUR TENT, AND WE SLEPT OUTSIDE, ON THE GROUND.



THEY FORCED US TO LEAVE ALL OUR VALUABLE THINGS BEHIND. JEWELRY AND MONEY, EVEN PENS. THEY THREATENED THAT THEY'D SHOOT EVERY TENTH ONE OF US IF WE DIDN'T OBEY.

I LATER FOUND OUT THAT MY DAD, IN SPITE OF THE RULES, KEPT A LITTLE PENCIL. THANKS TO THAT PENCIL HE WROTE A DIARY IN HIS CALENDAR THAT HE KEPT THE WHOLE TIME HE WAS IN THE CAMP.

AFTER A FEW DAYS, WE WERE TAKEN TO A BRICKYARD IN SZEGED. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN TWO THOUSAND JEWS, ALL FROM MY HOMETOWN. WE MADE BEDS FROM STRAW AND SLEPT CLOSE BESIDE EACH OTHER.



WE WERE DIVIDED INTO THREE GROUPS AT THE BRICKYARD. MY FAMILY WAS IN GROUP TWO.

MY GREAT AUNT HANNA WAS THERE TOO, BUT SHE DISAPPEARED. I NEVER SAW HER AGAIN.

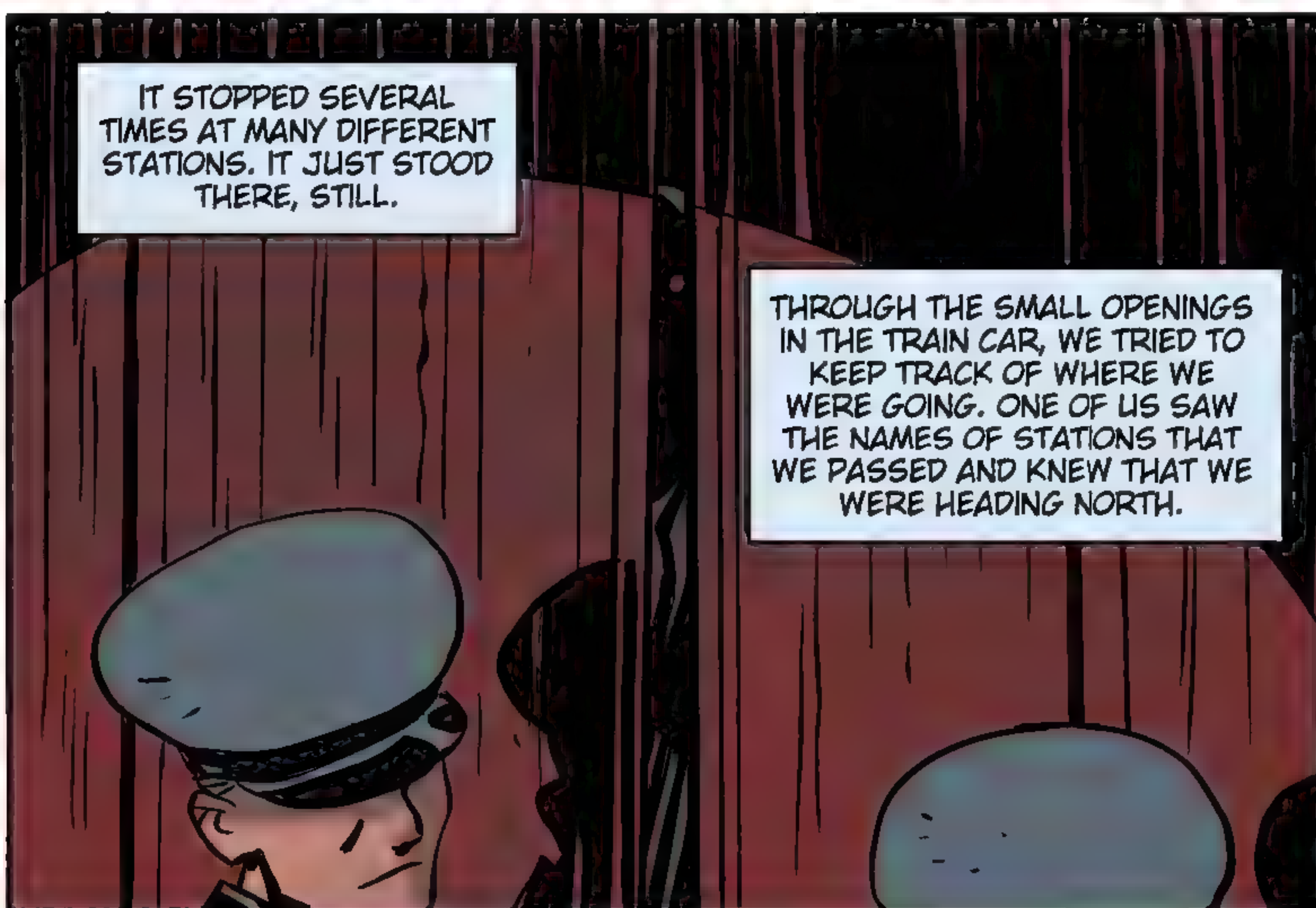


I REMEMBER HOW IT FELT, BEING STOWED INTO THE TRAIN CARS.

THE TRAIN WAS VERY LONG.



IT STOPPED SEVERAL TIMES AT MANY DIFFERENT STATIONS. IT JUST STOOD THERE, STILL.



THROUGH THE SMALL OPENINGS IN THE TRAIN CAR, WE TRIED TO KEEP TRACK OF WHERE WE WERE GOING. ONE OF US SAW THE NAMES OF STATIONS THAT WE PASSED AND KNEW THAT WE WERE HEADING NORTH.

WE ARRIVED IN KOŠICE BY THE BORDER TOWARD SLOVAKIA, AND THE TRAIN STOPPED.

NAZI
TYSKLAND

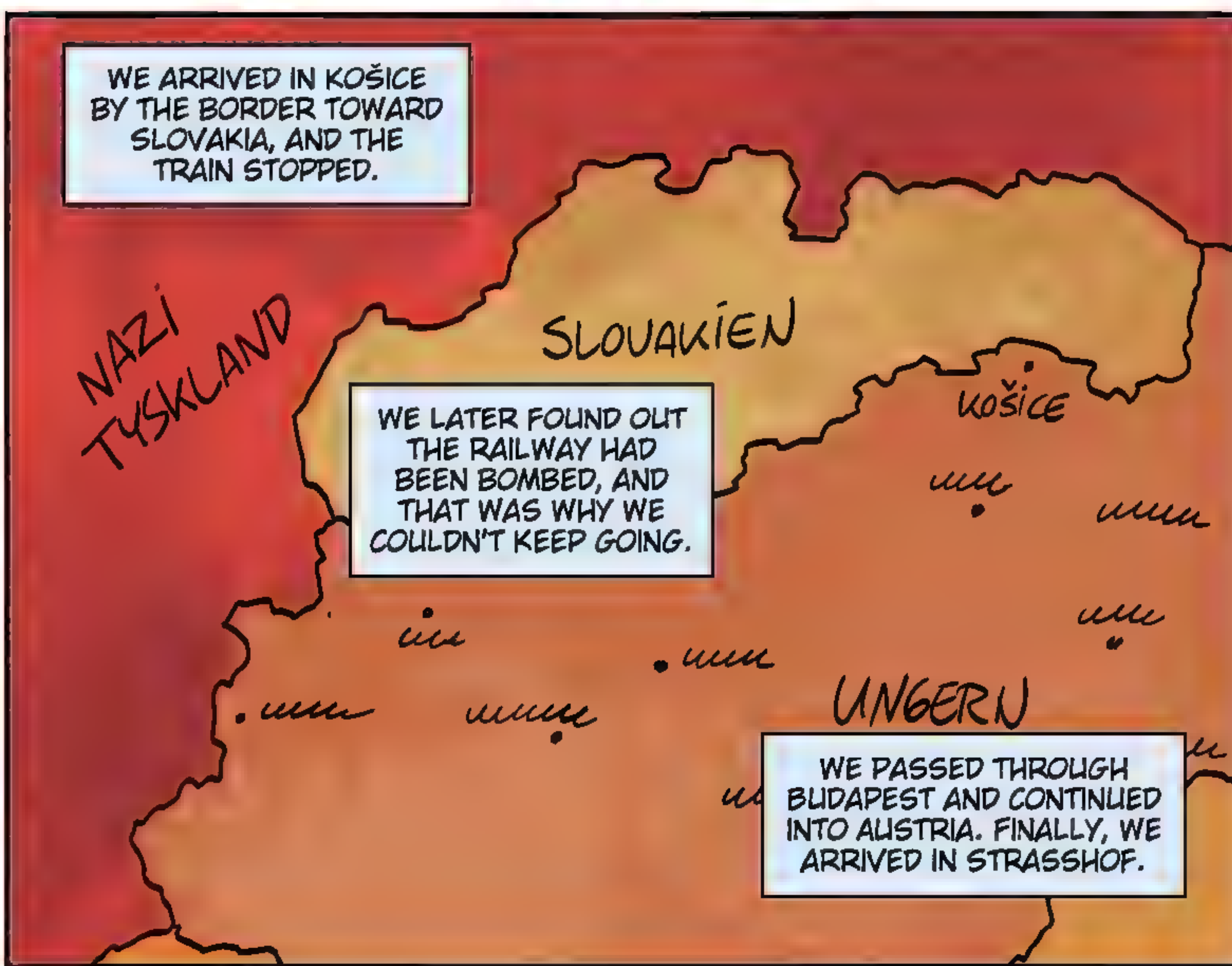
SLOVAKIEN

KOŠICE

WE LATER FOUND OUT THE RAILWAY HAD BEEN BOMBED, AND THAT WAS WHY WE COULDN'T KEEP GOING.

UNGARN

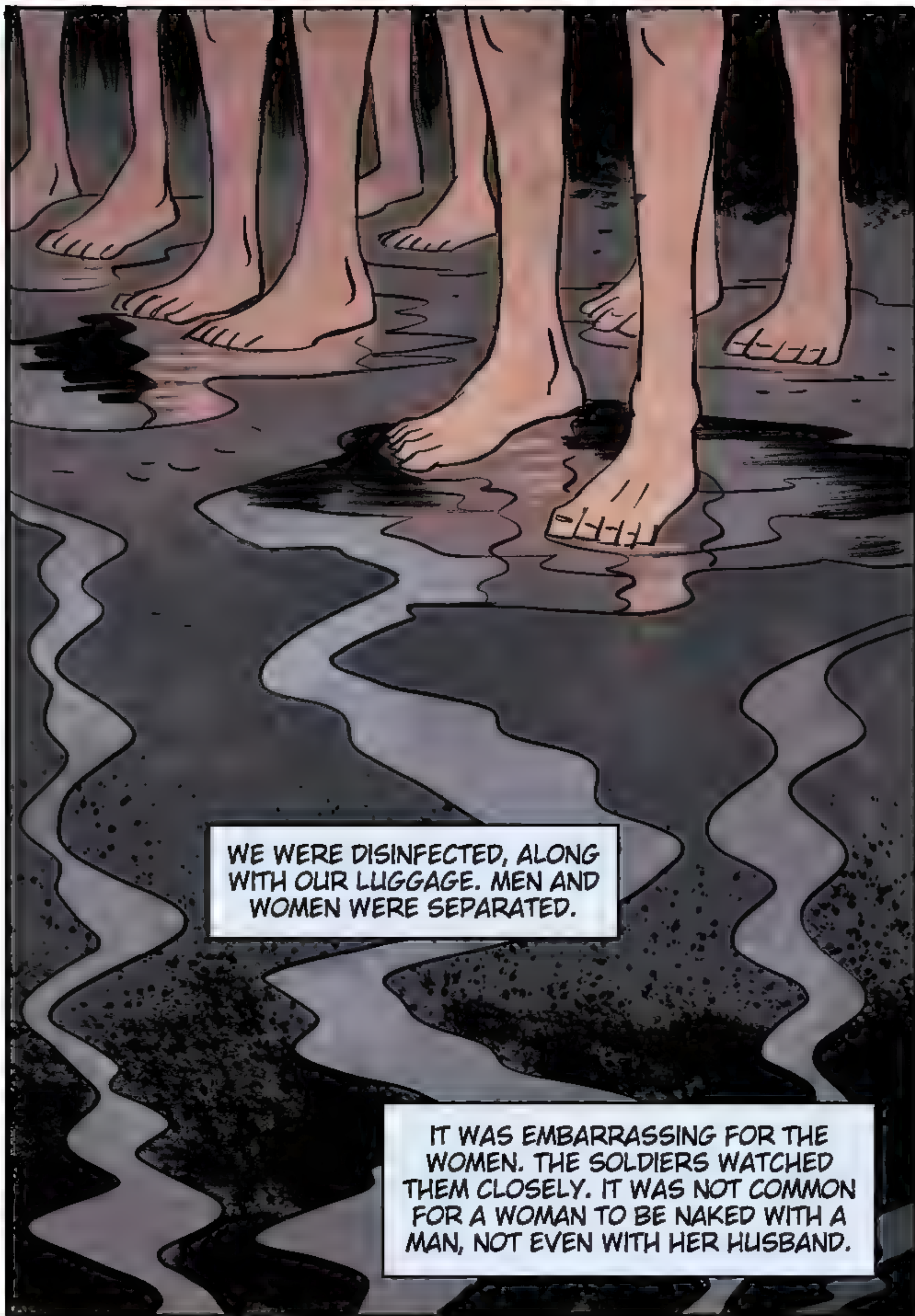
WE PASSED THROUGH BUDAPEST AND CONTINUED INTO AUSTRIA. FINALLY, WE ARRIVED IN STRASSHOF.



IT WAS DARK WHEN WE GOT THERE. PEOPLE EVERYWHERE. MANY LOST SIGHT OF EACH OTHER IN THE CROWD. THROUGH THE NIGHT YOU COULD HEAR PEOPLE SHOUTING EACH OTHER'S NAMES, LOOKING FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.



WE WERE DISINFECTED, ALONG WITH OUR LUGGAGE. MEN AND WOMEN WERE SEPARATED.

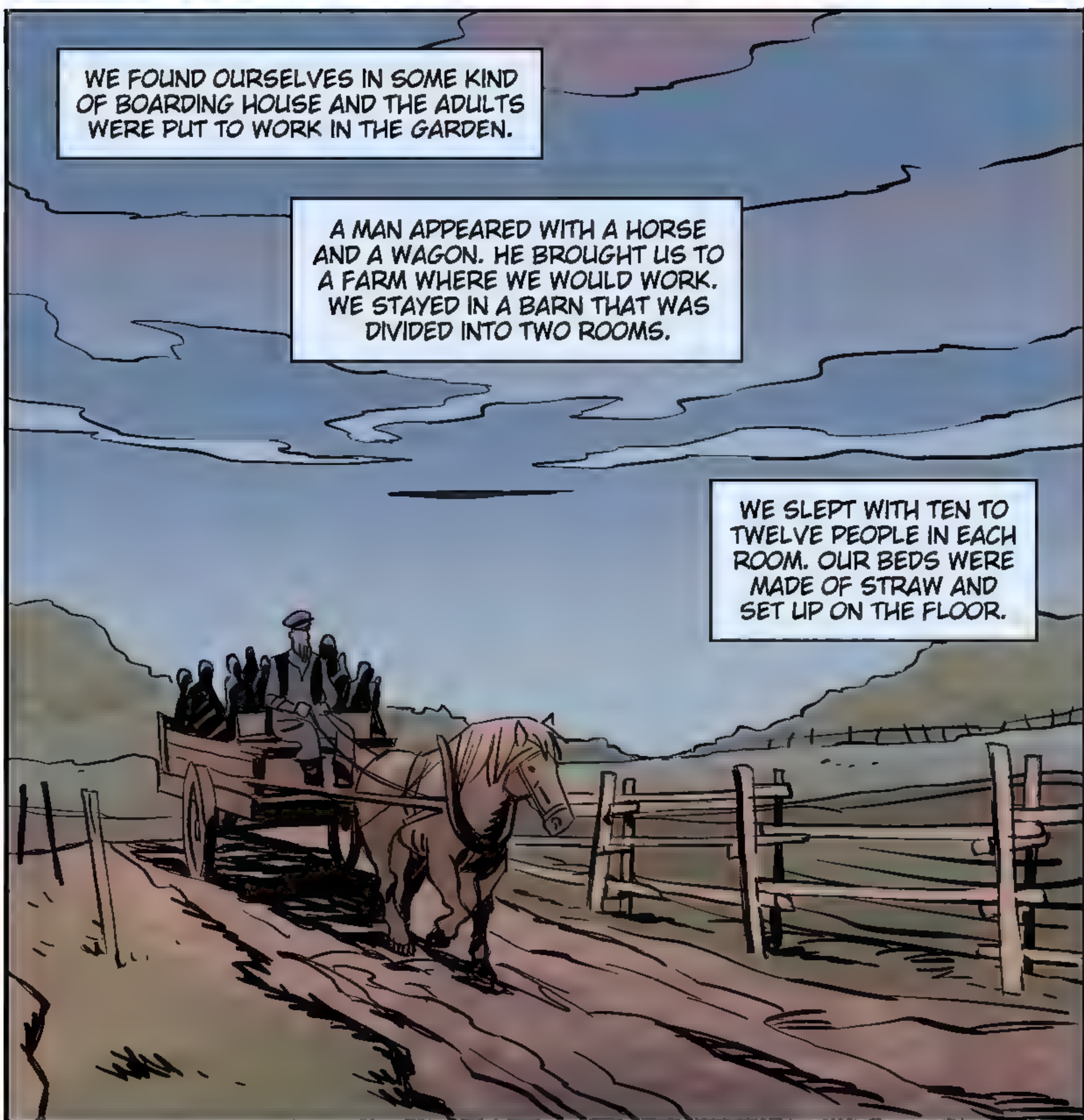


IT WAS EMBARRASSING FOR THE WOMEN. THE SOLDIERS WATCHED THEM CLOSELY. IT WAS NOT COMMON FOR A WOMAN TO BE NAKED WITH A MAN, NOT EVEN WITH HER HUSBAND.

AFTER THEY SHOWERED US, THEY FORCED US INTO THE BARRACKS. ONE WEEK LATER WE WERE PUT ON A TRAIN AGAIN, TO BRUCK AN DER LEITHA IN AUSTRIA.

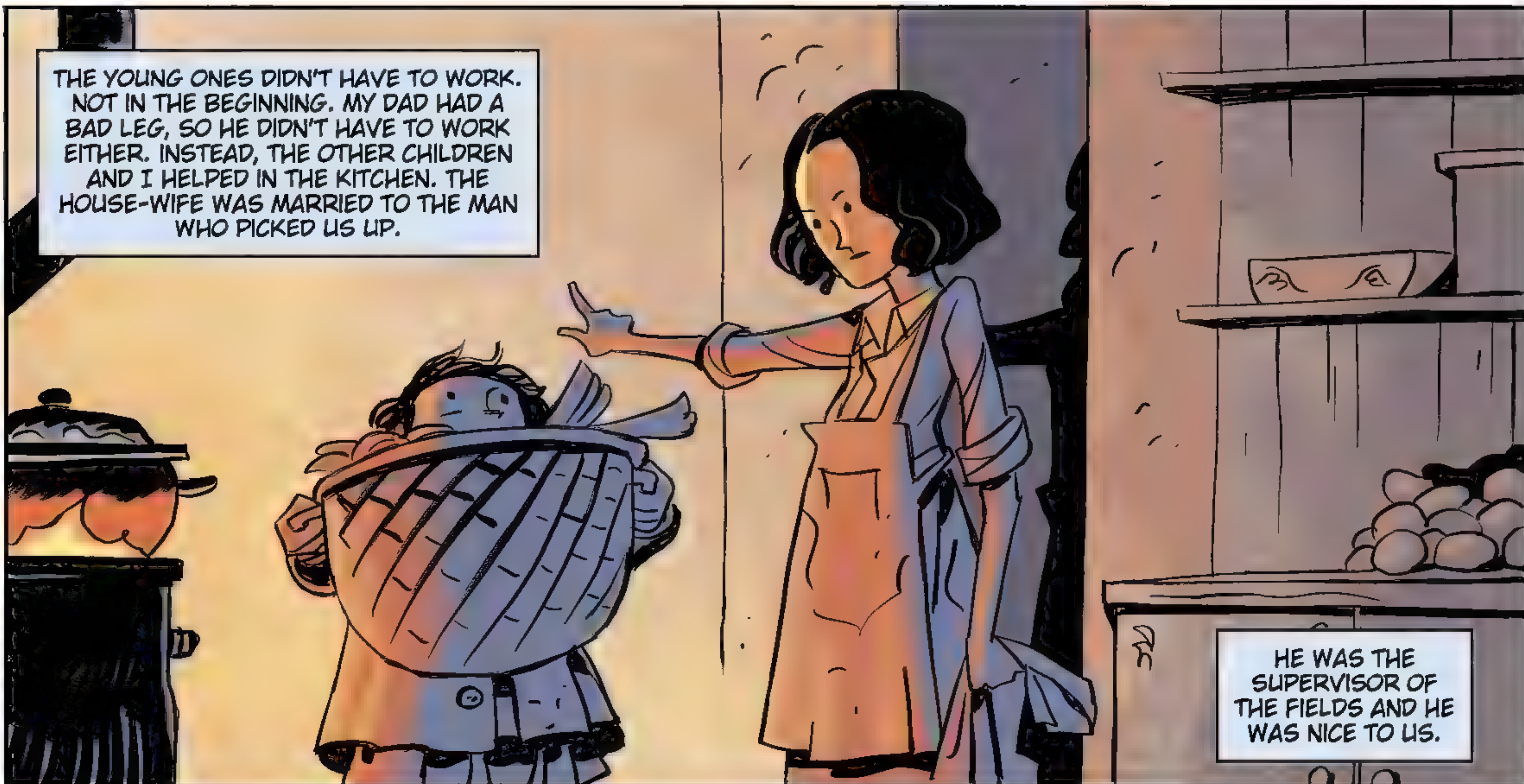


WE FOUND OURSELVES IN SOME KIND OF BOARDING HOUSE AND THE ADULTS WERE PUT TO WORK IN THE GARDEN.



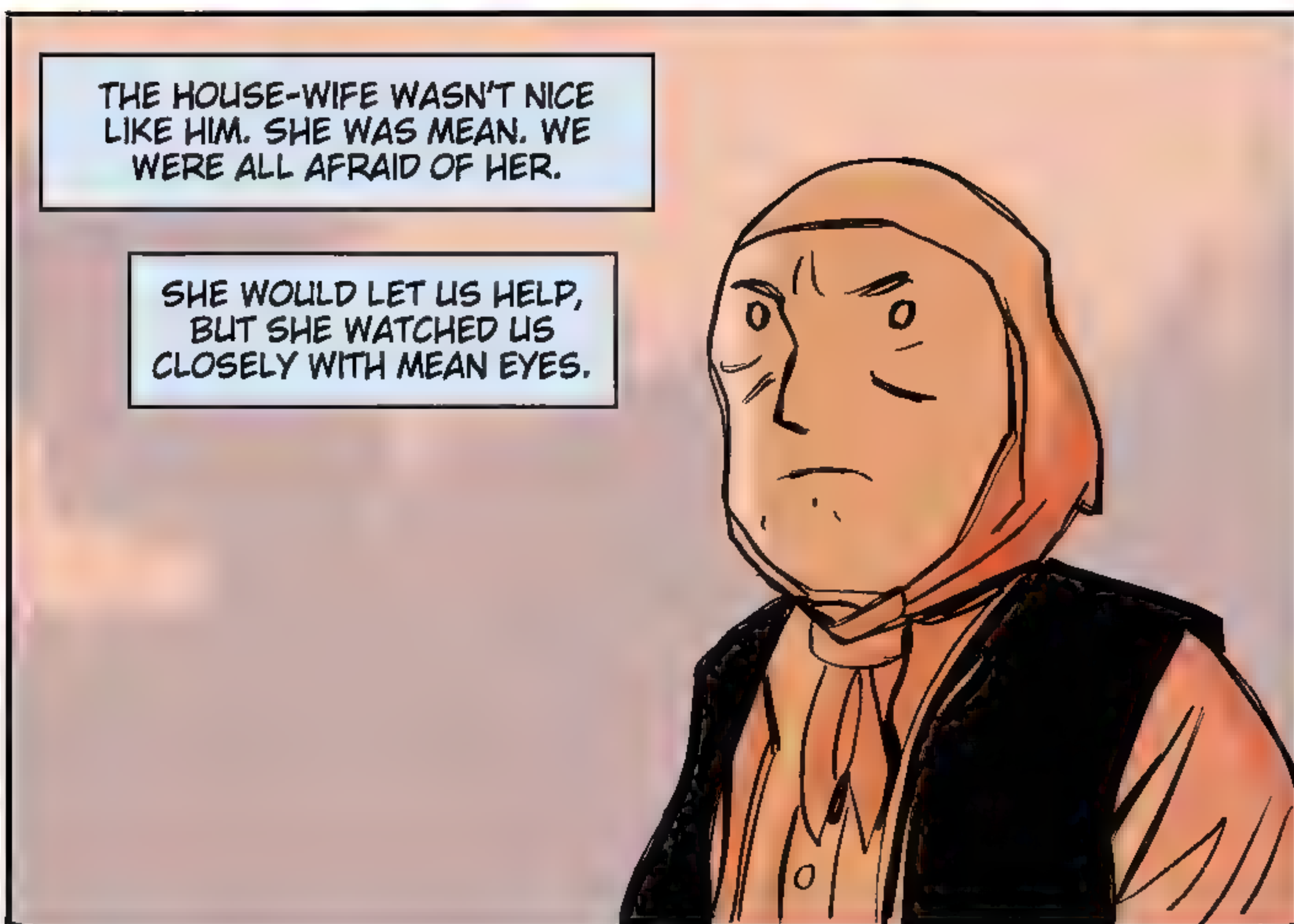
A MAN APPEARED WITH A HORSE AND A WAGON. HE BROUGHT US TO A FARM WHERE WE WOULD WORK. WE STAYED IN A BARN THAT WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO ROOMS.

WE SLEPT WITH TEN TO TWELVE PEOPLE IN EACH ROOM. OUR BEDS WERE MADE OF STRAW AND SET UP ON THE FLOOR.



THE YOUNG ONES DIDN'T HAVE TO WORK. NOT IN THE BEGINNING. MY DAD HAD A BAD LEG, SO HE DIDN'T HAVE TO WORK EITHER. INSTEAD, THE OTHER CHILDREN AND I HELPED IN THE KITCHEN. THE HOUSE-WIFE WAS MARRIED TO THE MAN WHO PICKED US UP.

HE WAS THE SUPERVISOR OF THE FIELDS AND HE WAS NICE TO US.



THE HOUSE-WIFE WASN'T NICE LIKE HIM. SHE WAS MEAN. WE WERE ALL AFRAID OF HER.

SHE WOULD LET US HELP, BUT SHE WATCHED US CLOSELY WITH MEAN EYES.




WE WERE SERVED POTATOES AND BEANS TWICE A DAY WITH BREAD.



ON SUNDAYS, WE ATE MEAT. THE CHILDREN WERE GIVEN MILK EVERY DAY. LIFE AT THE FARM WAS ALL RIGHT. WE WANTED TO STAY THERE UNTIL THE WAR ENDED.

ONE DAY, GERMAN SOLDIERS ARRIVED WITH A GROUP OF POLISH WOMEN. THE WOMEN STAYED IN ANOTHER PART OF THE FARM.

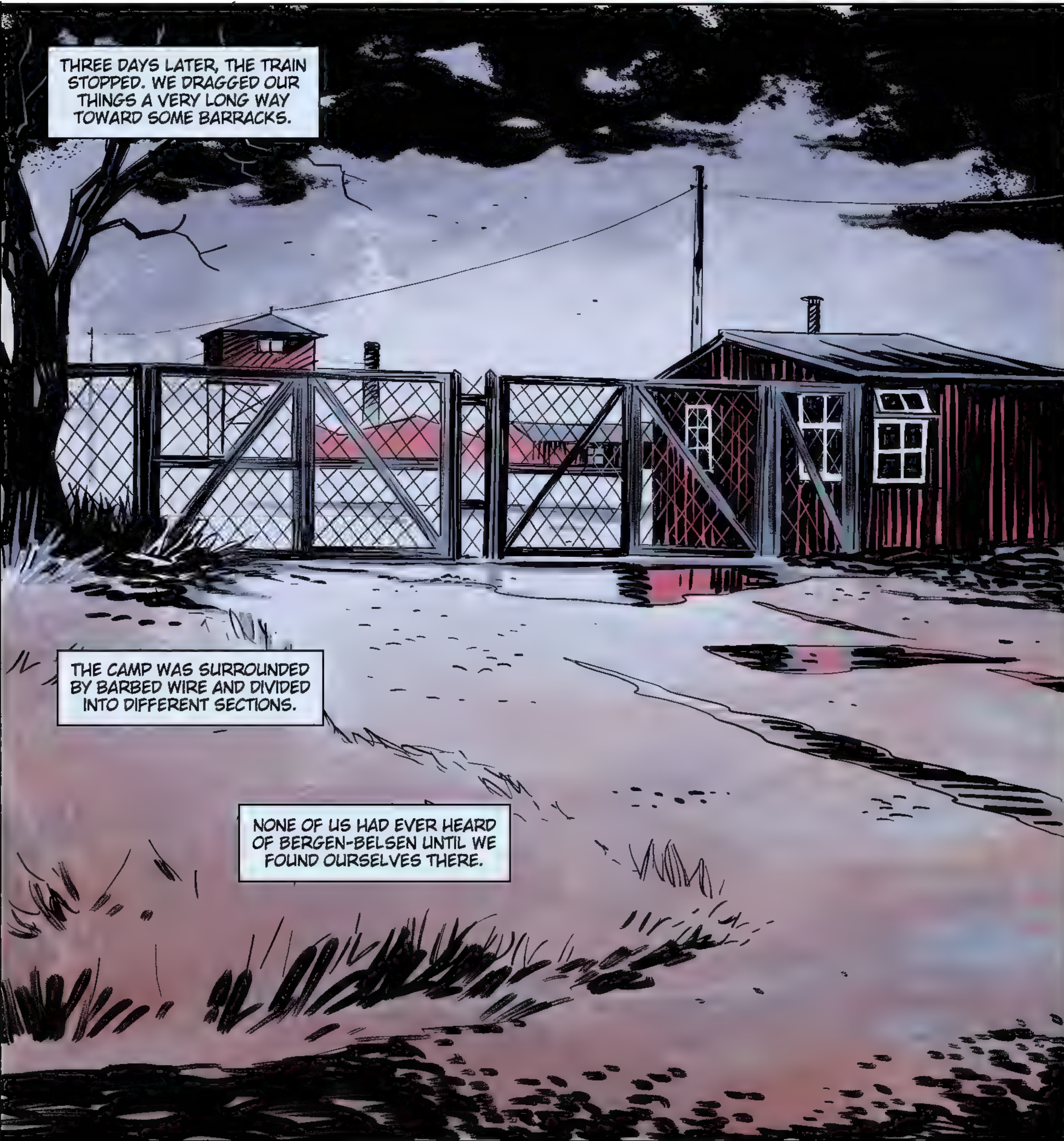
THE GERMANS FINALLY FORCED ALL OF US TO THE FIELDS. IT WAS HEAVY WORK. AN OLD WOMAN DIED THERE.



AT THE END OF
NOVEMBER, THEY TOLD
US TO PACK OUR THINGS.

THEY TOOK US BACK TO
STRASSHOF. WE SPENT
THE FIRST NIGHT OUTSIDE.

WE STAYED IN STRASSHOF FOR
ABOUT A WEEK UNTIL THEY PUT
US ON ANOTHER TRAIN.



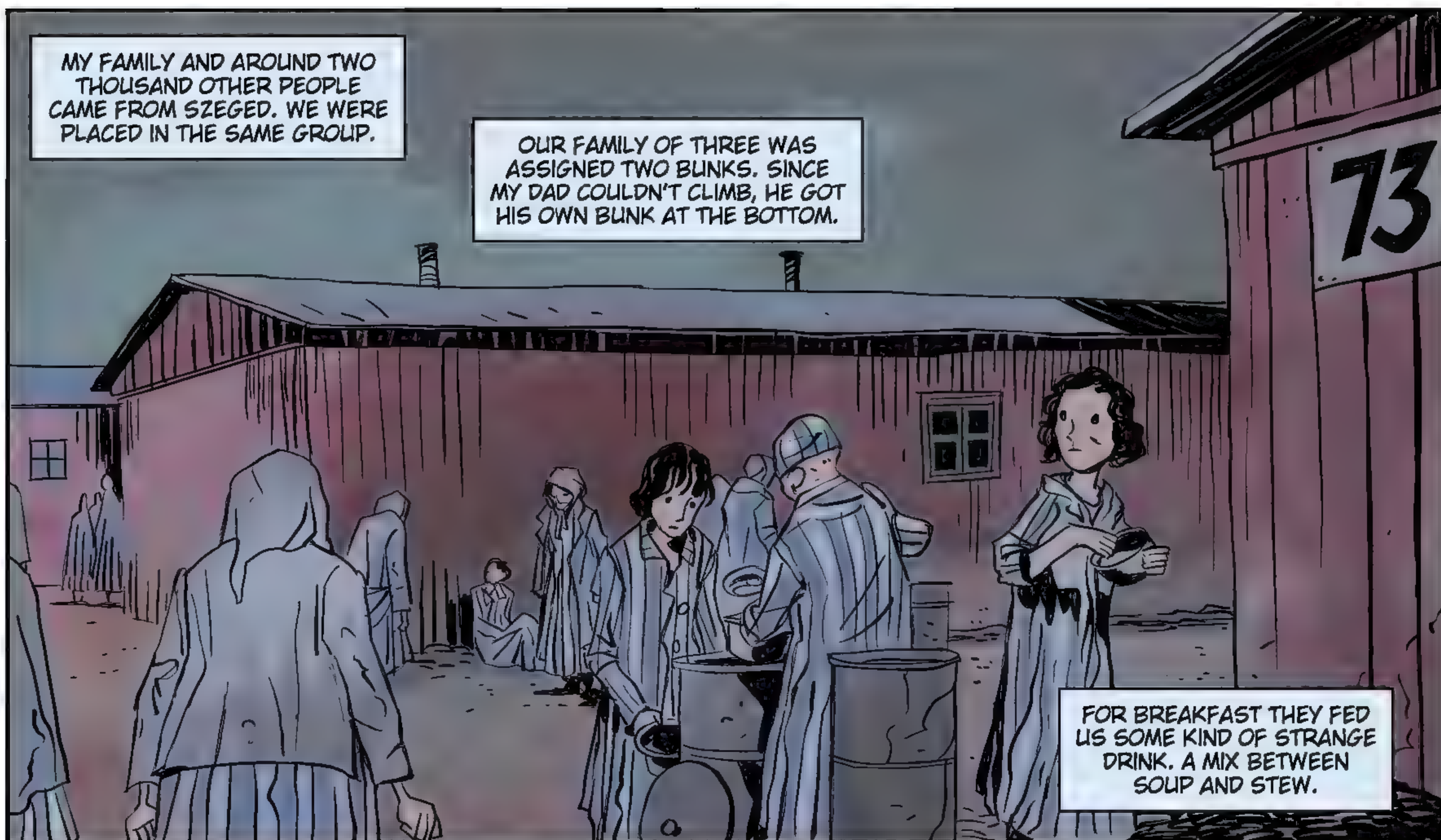
THREE DAYS LATER, THE TRAIN
STOPPED. WE DRAGGED OUR
THINGS A VERY LONG WAY
TOWARD SOME BARRACKS.

THE CAMP WAS SURROUNDED
BY BARBED WIRE AND DIVIDED
INTO DIFFERENT SECTIONS.

NONE OF US HAD EVER HEARD
OF BERGEN-BELSEN UNTIL WE
FOUND OURSELVES THERE.

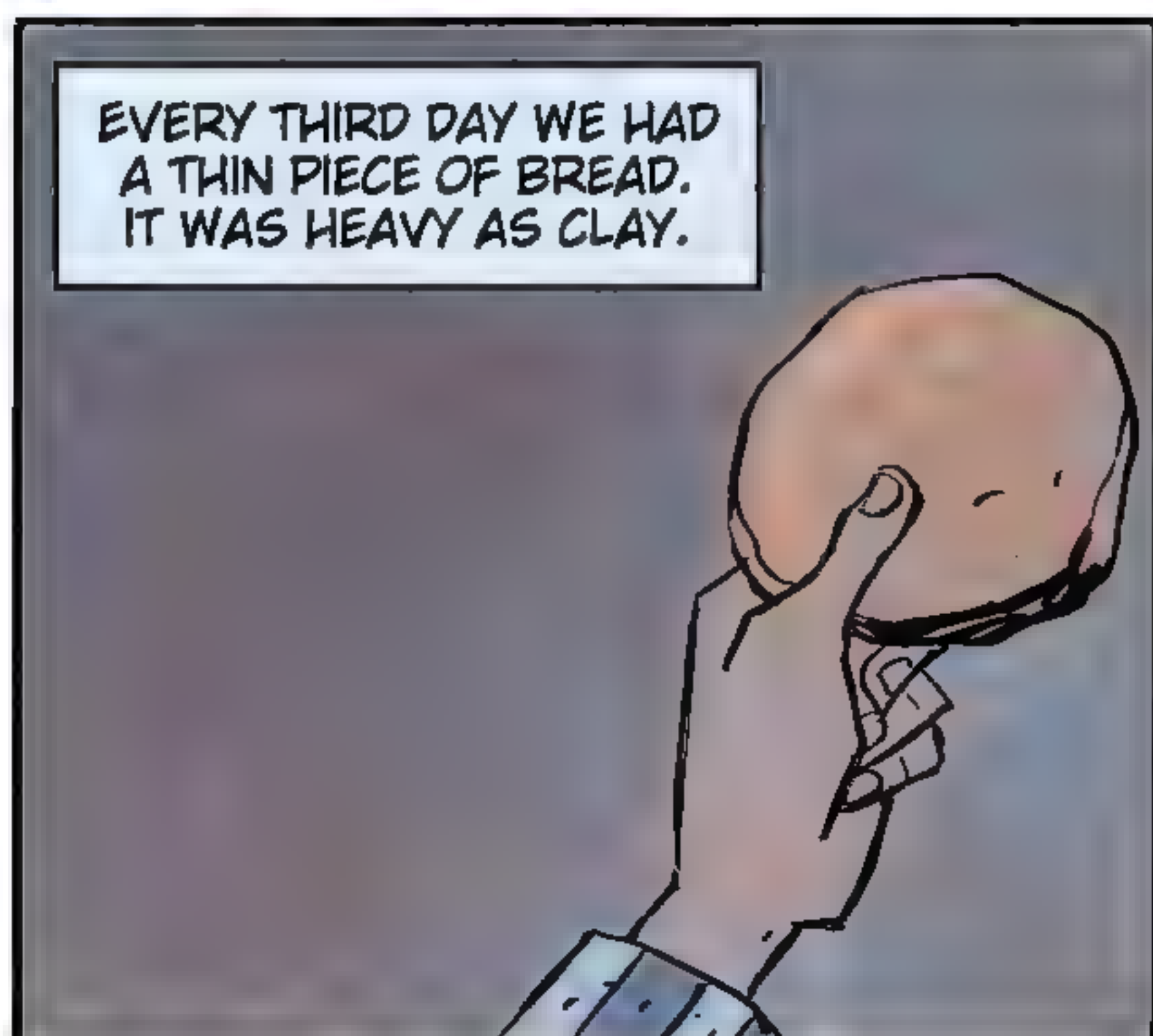
MY FAMILY AND AROUND TWO THOUSAND OTHER PEOPLE CAME FROM SZEGED. WE WERE PLACED IN THE SAME GROUP.

OUR FAMILY OF THREE WAS ASSIGNED TWO BUNKS. SINCE MY DAD COULDN'T CLIMB, HE GOT HIS OWN BUNK AT THE BOTTOM.



FOR BREAKFAST THEY FED US SOME KIND OF STRANGE DRINK. A MIX BETWEEN SOUP AND STEW.

EVERY THIRD DAY WE HAD A THIN PIECE OF BREAD. IT WAS HEAVY AS CLAY.

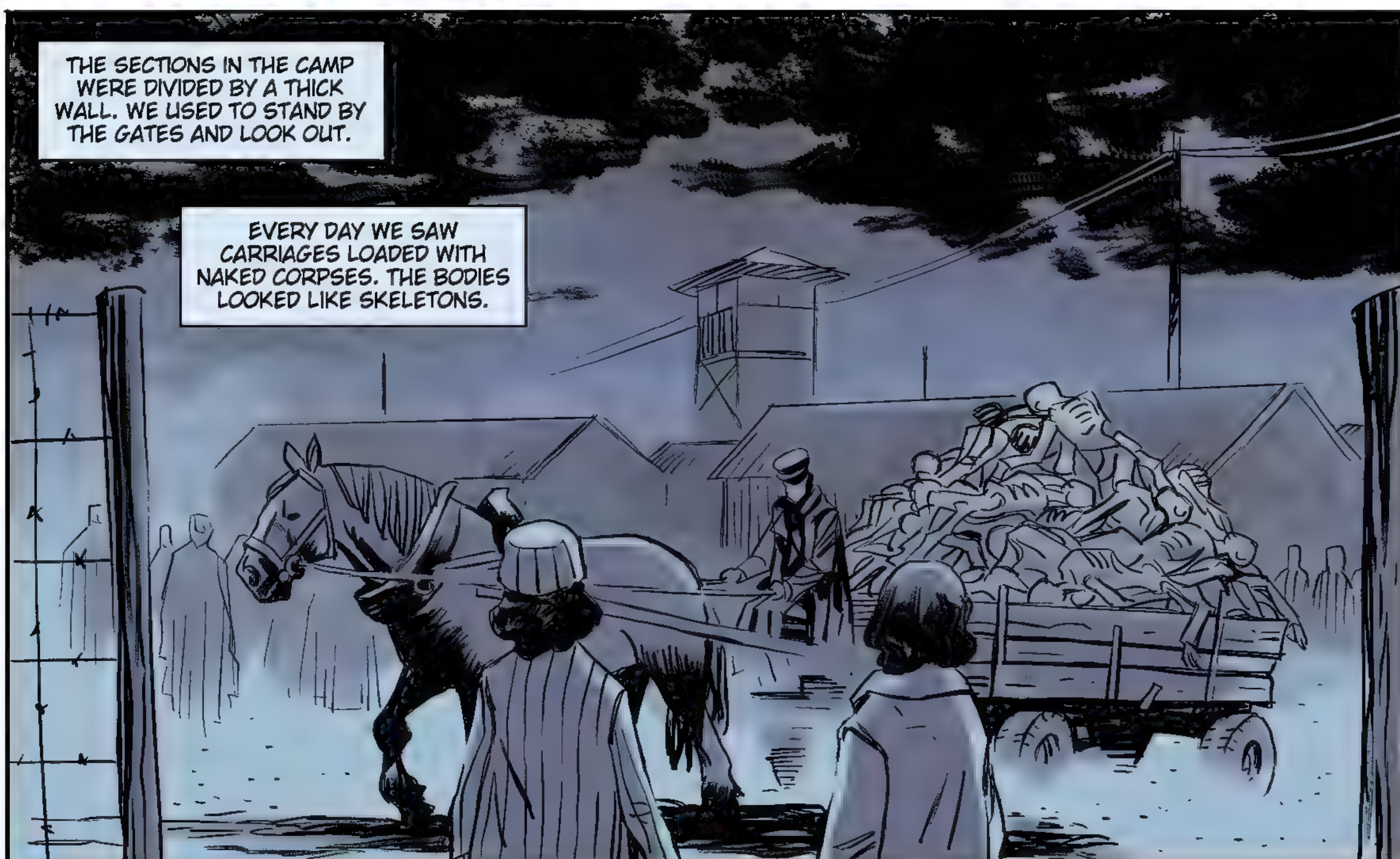


MY MUM MADE SURE THAT WE SAVED THE BREAD FOR THE DAYS WHEN WE WOULDN'T HAVE IT. WE STILL STARVED. AND IT WAS HORRIBLE.



THE SECTIONS IN THE CAMP WERE DIVIDED BY A THICK WALL. WE USED TO STAND BY THE GATES AND LOOK OUT.

EVERY DAY WE SAW CARRIAGES LOADED WITH NAKED CORPSES. THE BODIES LOOKED LIKE SKELETONS.



THERE WERE ONLY FAMILIES
IN OUR CAMP. IN SOME
SECTIONS, WOMEN WERE
KEPT SEPARATE FROM MEN.

GERMAN SOLDIERS WATCHED
OVER THE CAMP FROM THEIR
GUARD TOWER.



FROM THE TOWER THEY
CONSTANTLY SHINED THEIR
SEARCHLIGHT ON US.

THE SEARCHLIGHT FOLLOWED
US BACK AND FORTH AT NIGHT
WHEN WE USED THE TOILET.

THE DRY TOILET WAS A
LARGE ROOM WITH A BENCH
WHERE YOU SAT DOWN AND
DID WHAT YOU HAD TO DO.



BOTH MEN AND WOMEN USED
THE SAME TOILET. LIFE WAS
HORRIFYING IN BERGEN-BELSEN.

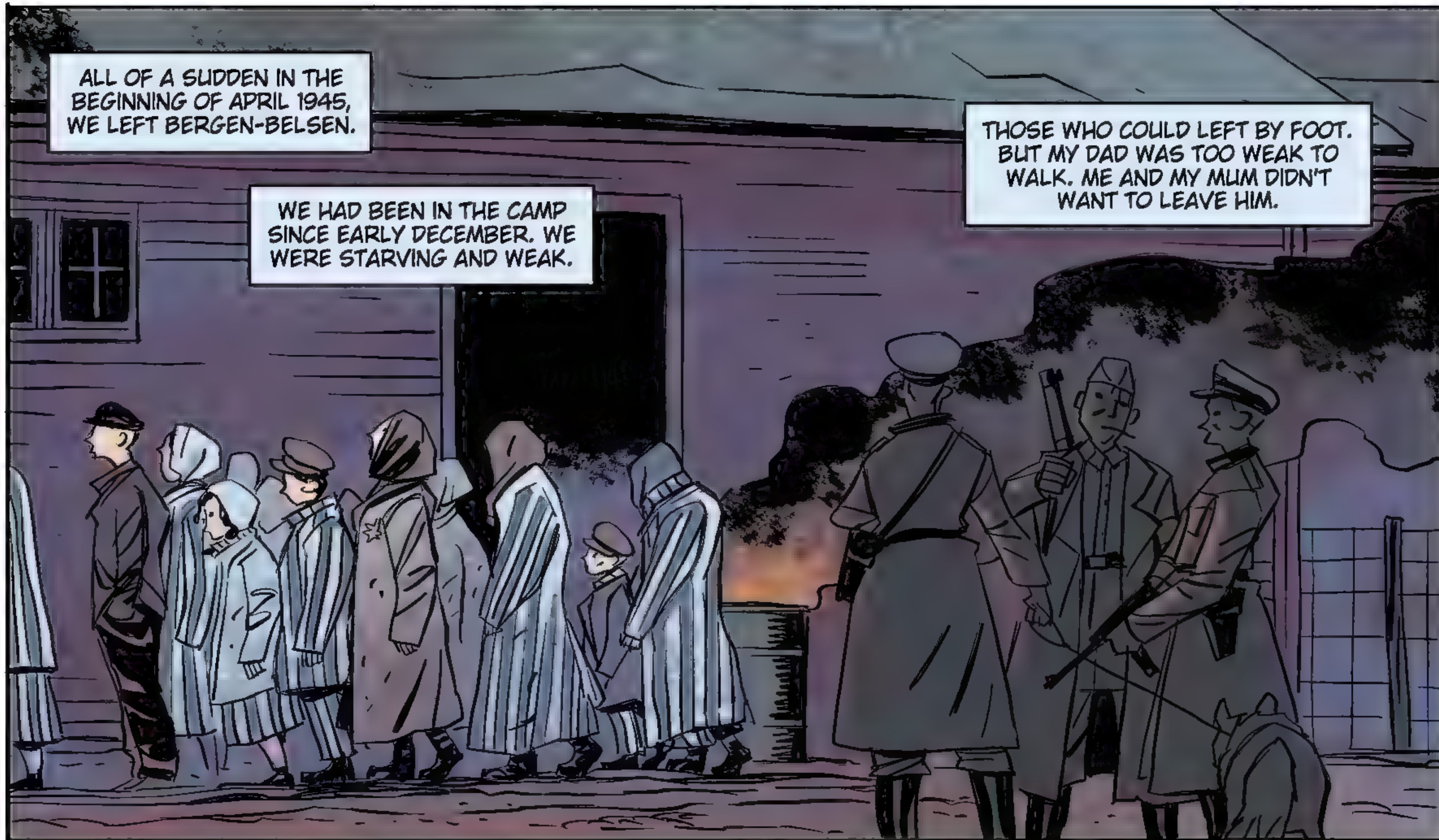
WE PRAYED AND BEGGED
GOD THAT A BOMB WOULD
JUST END IT ALL.

THAT'S HOW BAD THINGS
WERE. WE BEGGED FOR
DEATH. WE SAW NO LIGHT.

ALL OF A SUDDEN IN THE
BEGINNING OF APRIL 1945,
WE LEFT BERGEN-BELSEN.

WE HAD BEEN IN THE CAMP
SINCE EARLY DECEMBER. WE
WERE STARVING AND WEAK.

THOSE WHO COULD LEFT BY FOOT.
BUT MY DAD WAS TOO WEAK TO
WALK. ME AND MY MUM DIDN'T
WANT TO LEAVE HIM.



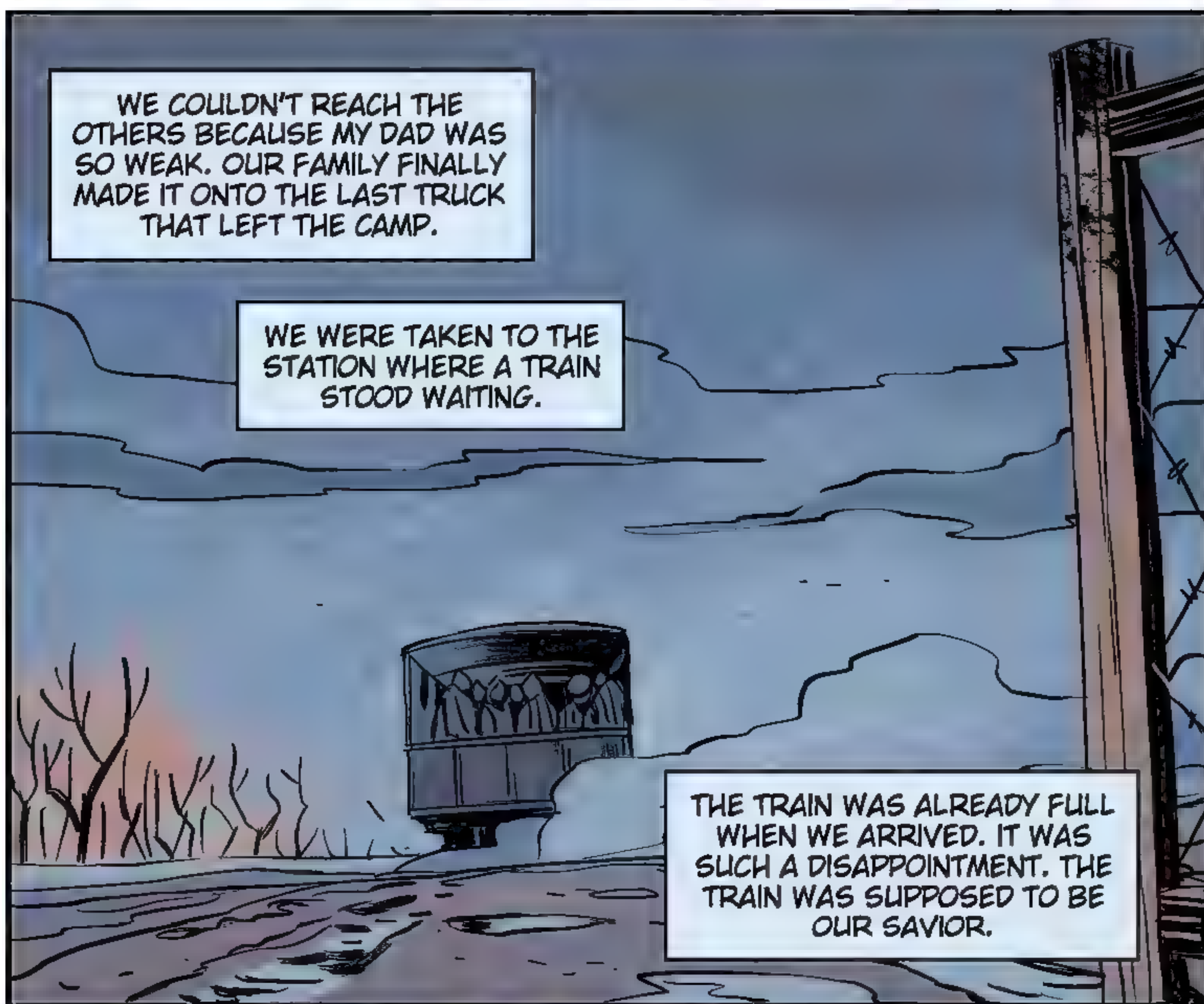
WE WATCHED EVERYONE
GO ONE BY ONE.

TRUCKS CAME TO TAKE THE
ONES STILL LEFT BEHIND.
WE STRUGGLED,
FRANTICALLY TRYING TO
CATCH UP WITH EVERYONE.



WE COULDN'T REACH THE
OTHERS BECAUSE MY DAD WAS
SO WEAK. OUR FAMILY FINALLY
MADE IT ONTO THE LAST TRUCK
THAT LEFT THE CAMP.

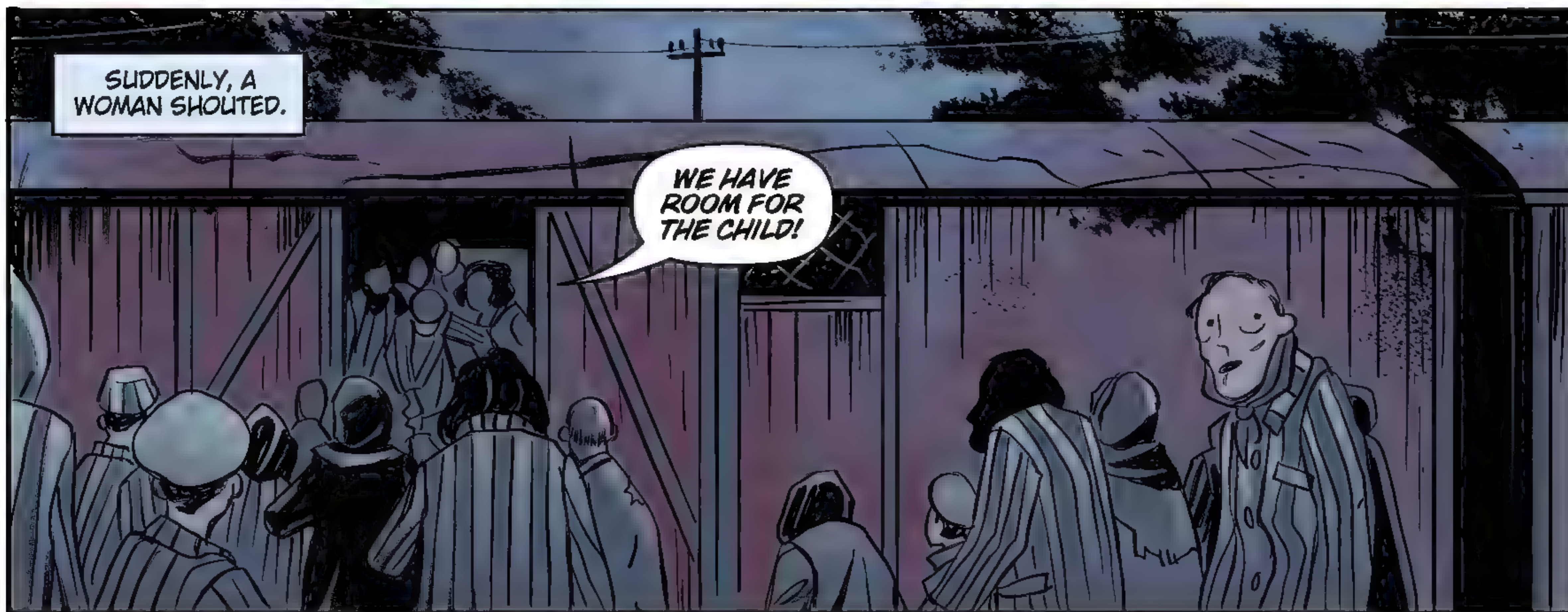
WE WERE TAKEN TO THE
STATION WHERE A TRAIN
STOOD WAITING.



THE TRAIN WAS ALREADY FULL
WHEN WE ARRIVED. IT WAS
SUCH A DISAPPOINTMENT. THE
TRAIN WAS SUPPOSED TO BE
OUR SAVIOR.

SUDDENLY, A
WOMAN SHOUTED.

WE HAVE
ROOM FOR
THE CHILD!





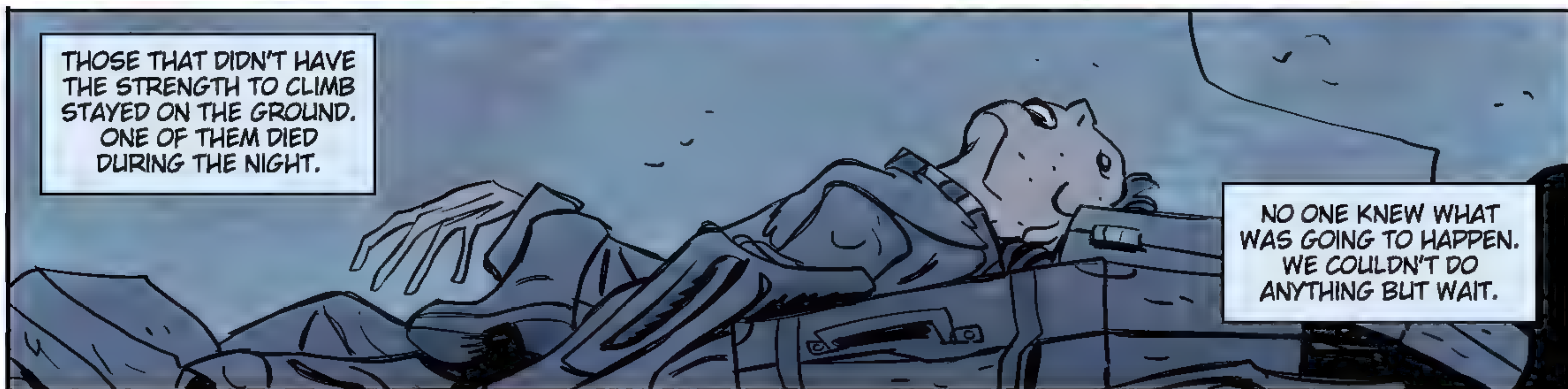
BUT MY DAD
DIDN'T WANT
ME TO GO.

BRING OUR CHILD
BACK! IF WE'RE
GOING TO DIE, THEN
WE SHOULD DIE
TOGETHER!



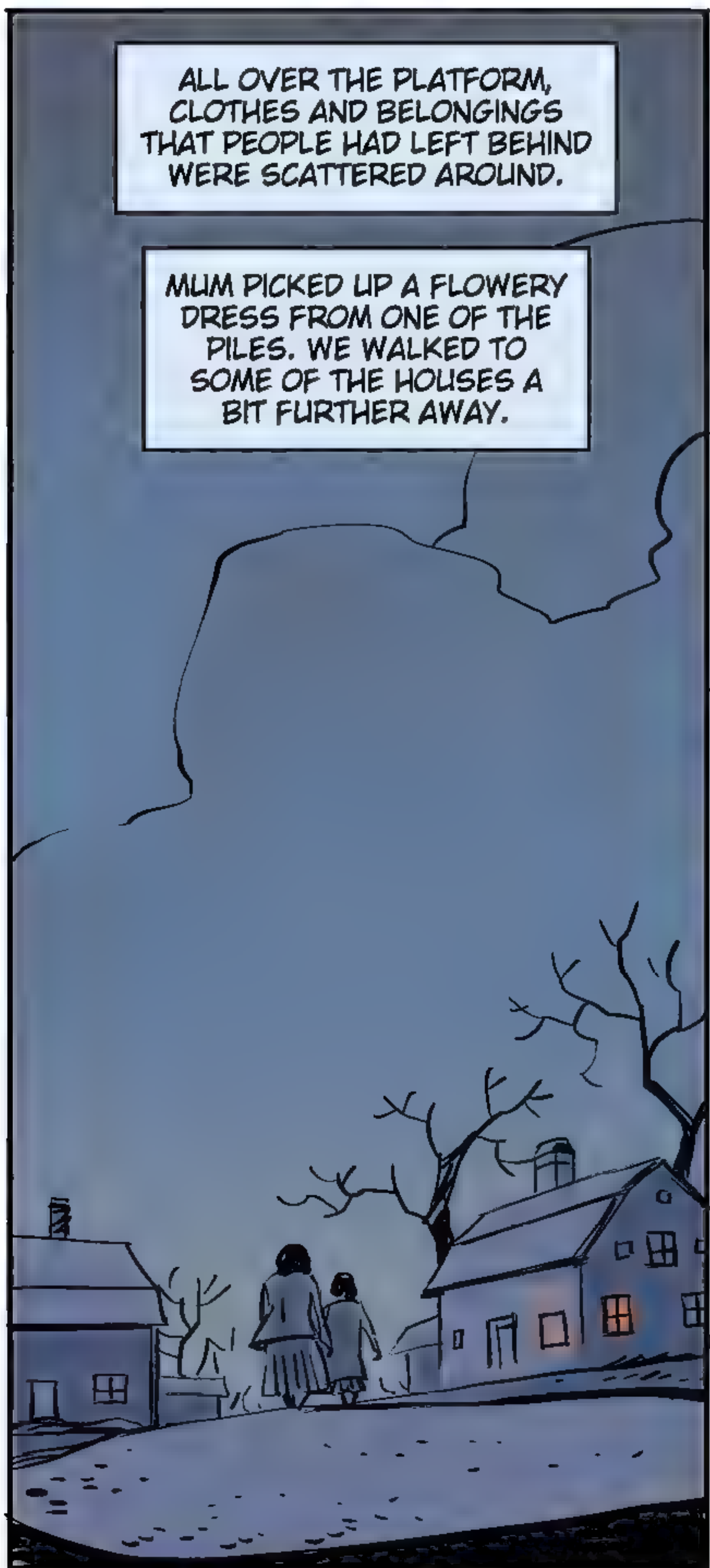
MY MUM GRABBED ME.
THE TRAIN LEFT THE STATION.
HAD I BEEN ON THE TRAIN, I
WOULD'VE BEEN SEPARATED
FROM MY PARENTS.

THERE WERE ABOUT FORTY
PEOPLE LEFT ON THE
PLATFORM. ONE TRAIN STOOD
ON THE TRACKS, EMPTY. WE
CLIMBED INTO THE TRAIN CAR.



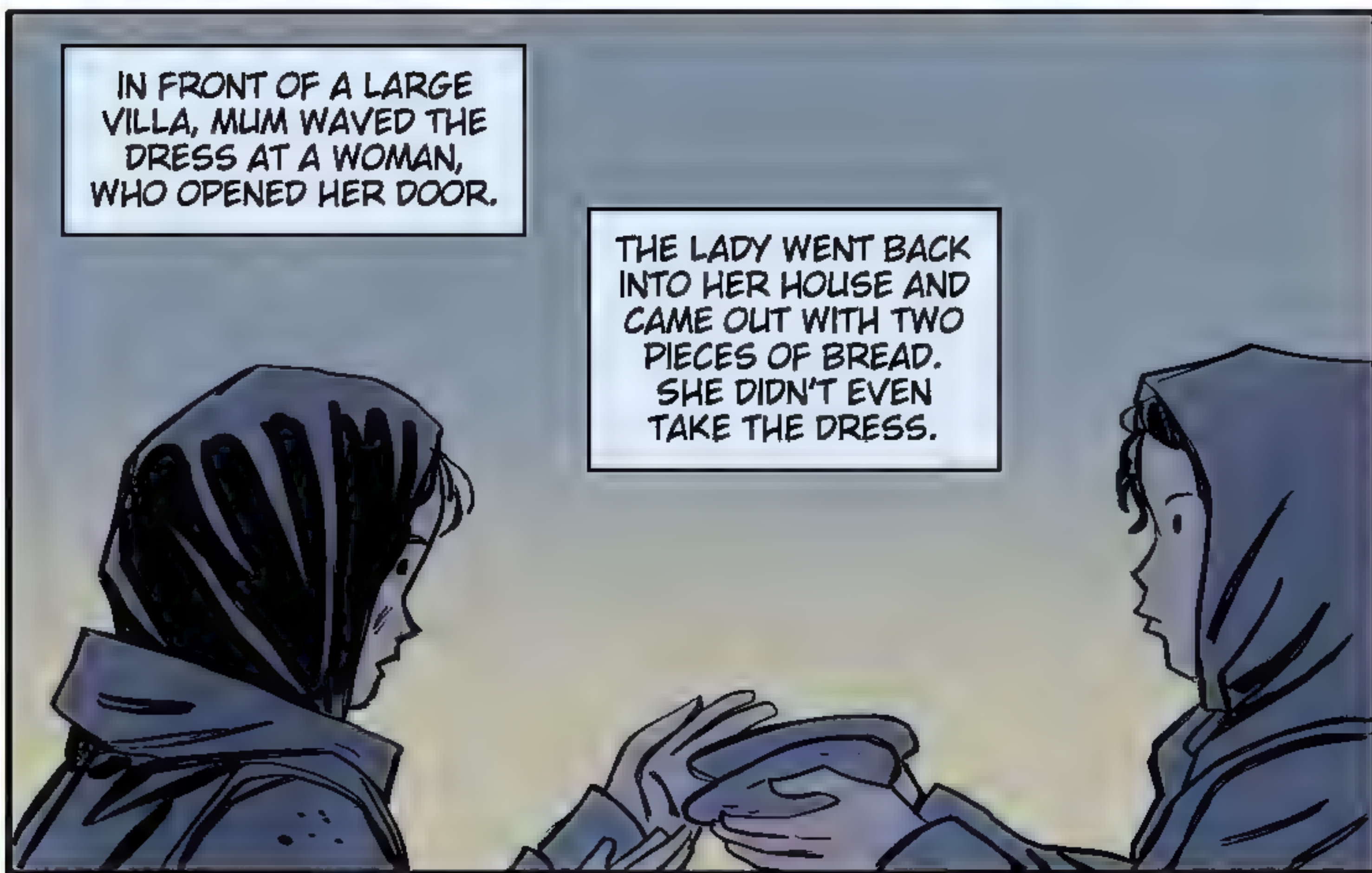
THOSE THAT DIDN'T HAVE
THE STRENGTH TO CLIMB
STAYED ON THE GROUND.
ONE OF THEM DIED
DURING THE NIGHT.

NO ONE KNEW WHAT
WAS GOING TO HAPPEN.
WE COULDN'T DO
ANYTHING BUT WAIT.



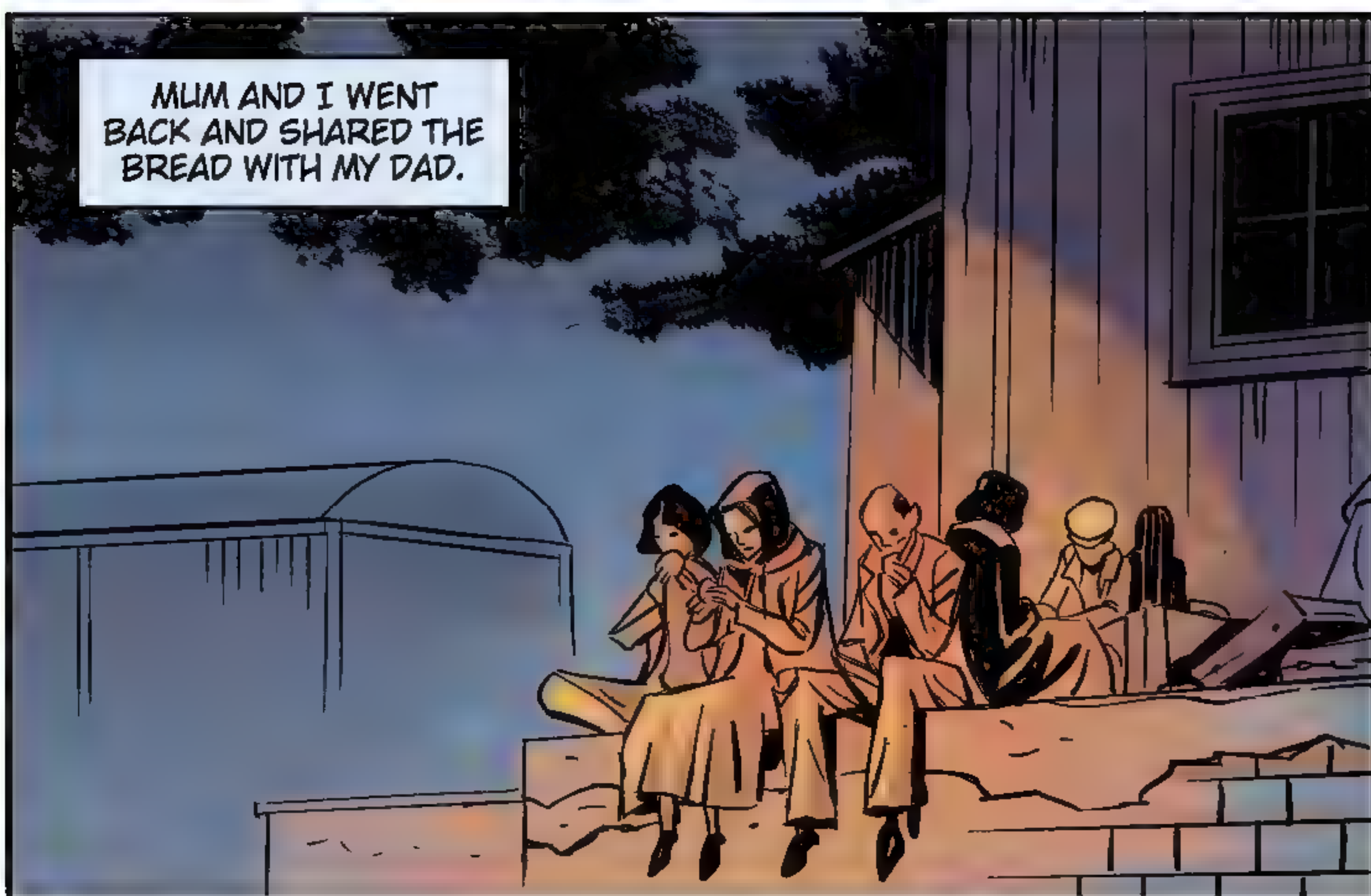
ALL OVER THE PLATFORM,
CLOTHES AND BELONGINGS
THAT PEOPLE HAD LEFT BEHIND
WERE SCATTERED AROUND.

MUM PICKED UP A FLOWERY
DRESS FROM ONE OF THE
PILES. WE WALKED TO
SOME OF THE HOUSES A
BIT FURTHER AWAY.



IN FRONT OF A LARGE
VILLA, MUM WAVED THE
DRESS AT A WOMAN,
WHO OPENED HER DOOR.

THE LADY WENT BACK
INTO HER HOUSE AND
CAME OUT WITH TWO
PIECES OF BREAD.
SHE DIDN'T EVEN
TAKE THE DRESS.



MUM AND I WENT
BACK AND SHARED THE
BREAD WITH MY DAD.



A TRAIN IS COMING!



THE WEAKEST OF US GOT HELP FROM OTHER PRISONERS. MANY OF THE DEAD WERE CARRIED.



THE MEN WERE THIN AS SKELETONS. SUDDENLY, THE PLATFORM WAS COMPLETELY CROWDED. I FOUND A SWEDISH TURNIP, BUT ONE OF THE MEN HAD ALSO LAID EYES ON IT.



A GERMAN SOLDIER STARTED TO BEAT THE MAN. HE HIT HIM AND HIT HIM UNTIL THE MAN LAY ON THE GROUND, DEAD.

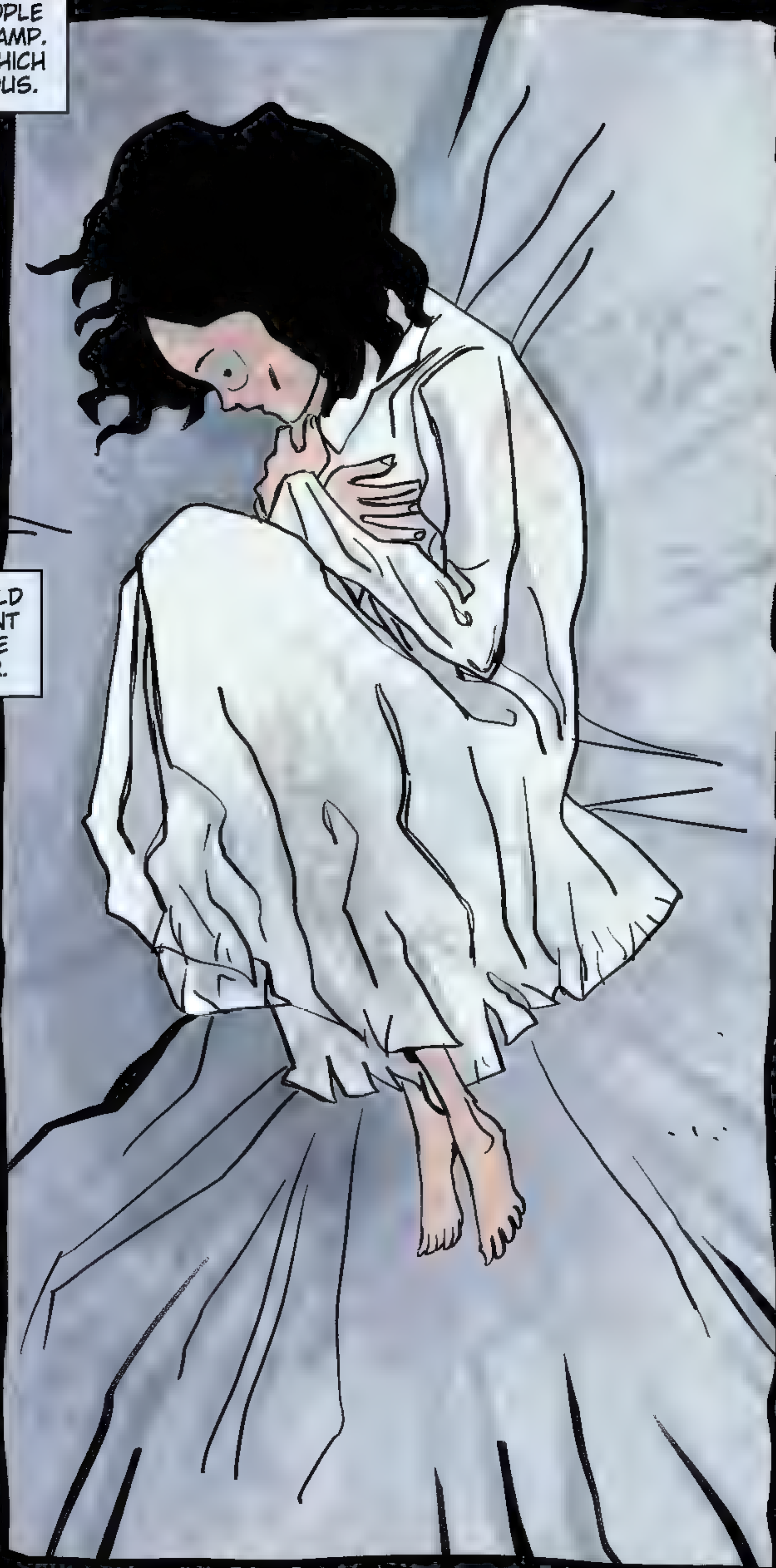
ALL MEN WERE TAKEN TO THE CAMP, BUT MANY DEAD BODIES WERE LEFT LYING THERE ON THE PLATFORM.

FINALLY, WE WERE TAKEN BACK TO BERGEN-BELSEN, THIS TIME TO A DIFFERENT SECTION. THIS WAS A CAMP FOR DUTCH JEWS.*

ONLY ABOUT TEN PEOPLE WERE LEFT IN THAT CAMP. THEY HAD TYPHUS, WHICH WAS VERY CONTAGIOUS.

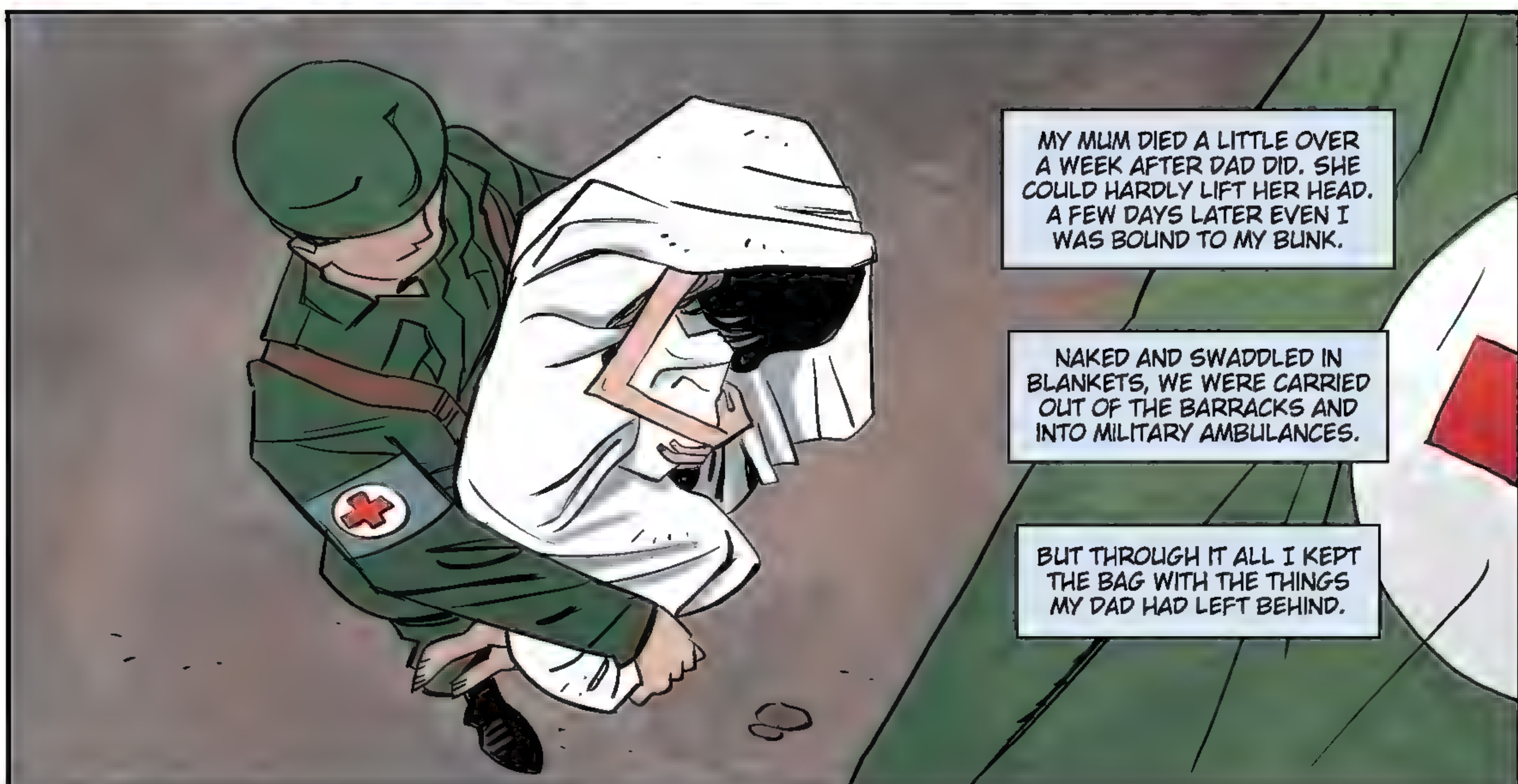
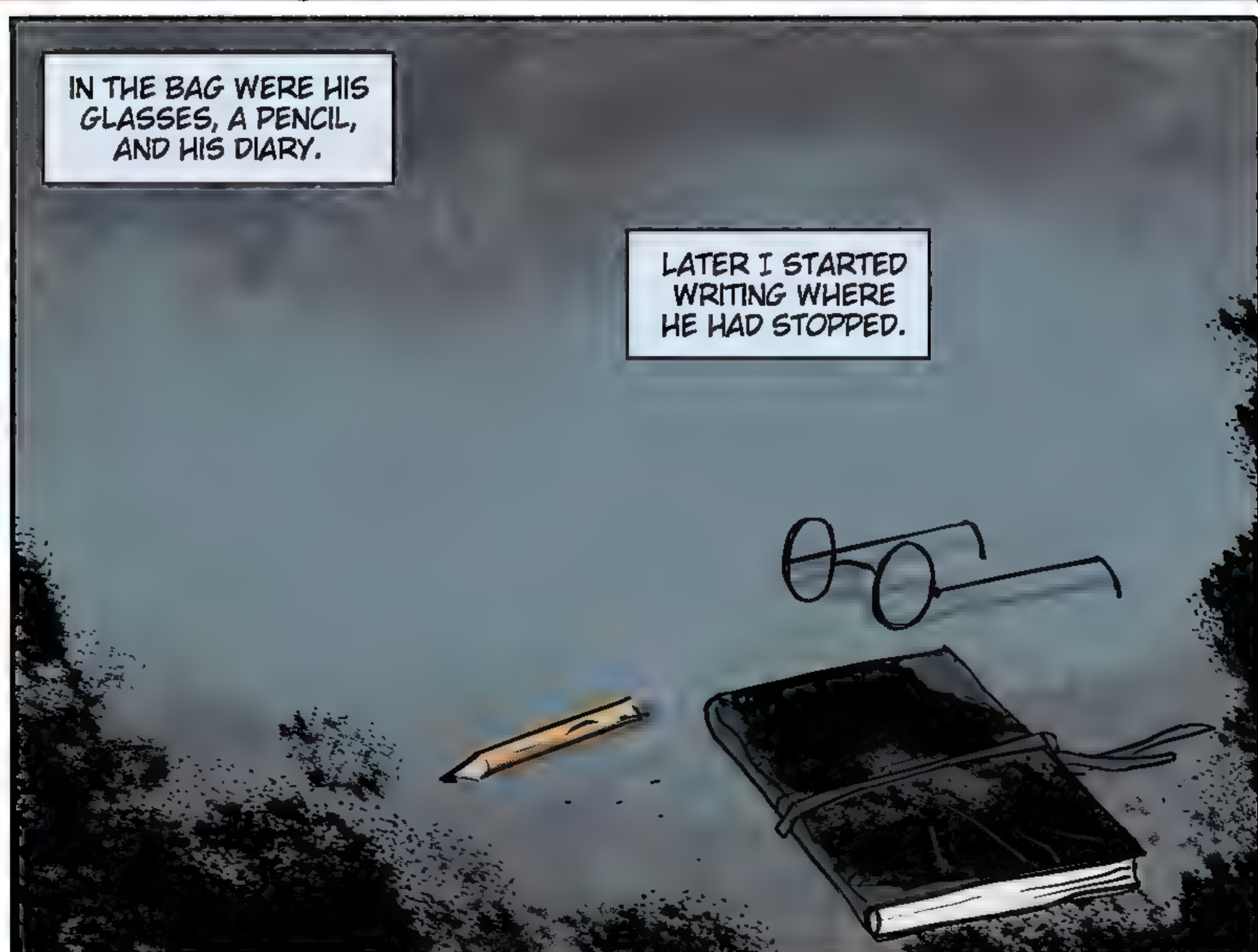
THEY ALL LAID ON THEIR BUNKS.

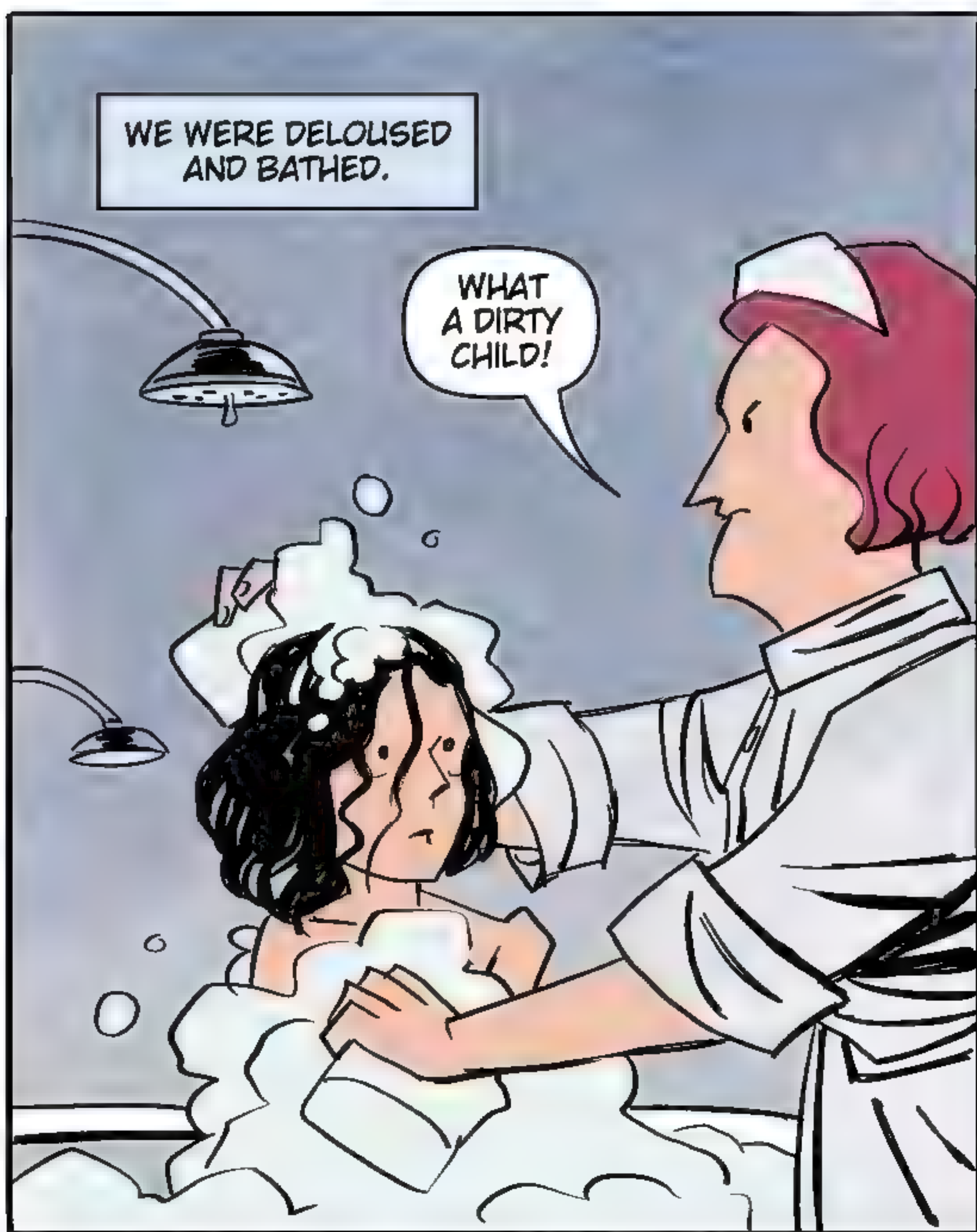
AS LONG AS MY MUM COULD STAND UPRIGHT, SHE WENT AROUND HELPING PEOPLE AND GIVING THEM WATER.



TOWARD THE END, JUST BEFORE THE LIBERATION, MY MUM WAS ALSO WEAK AND ILL.

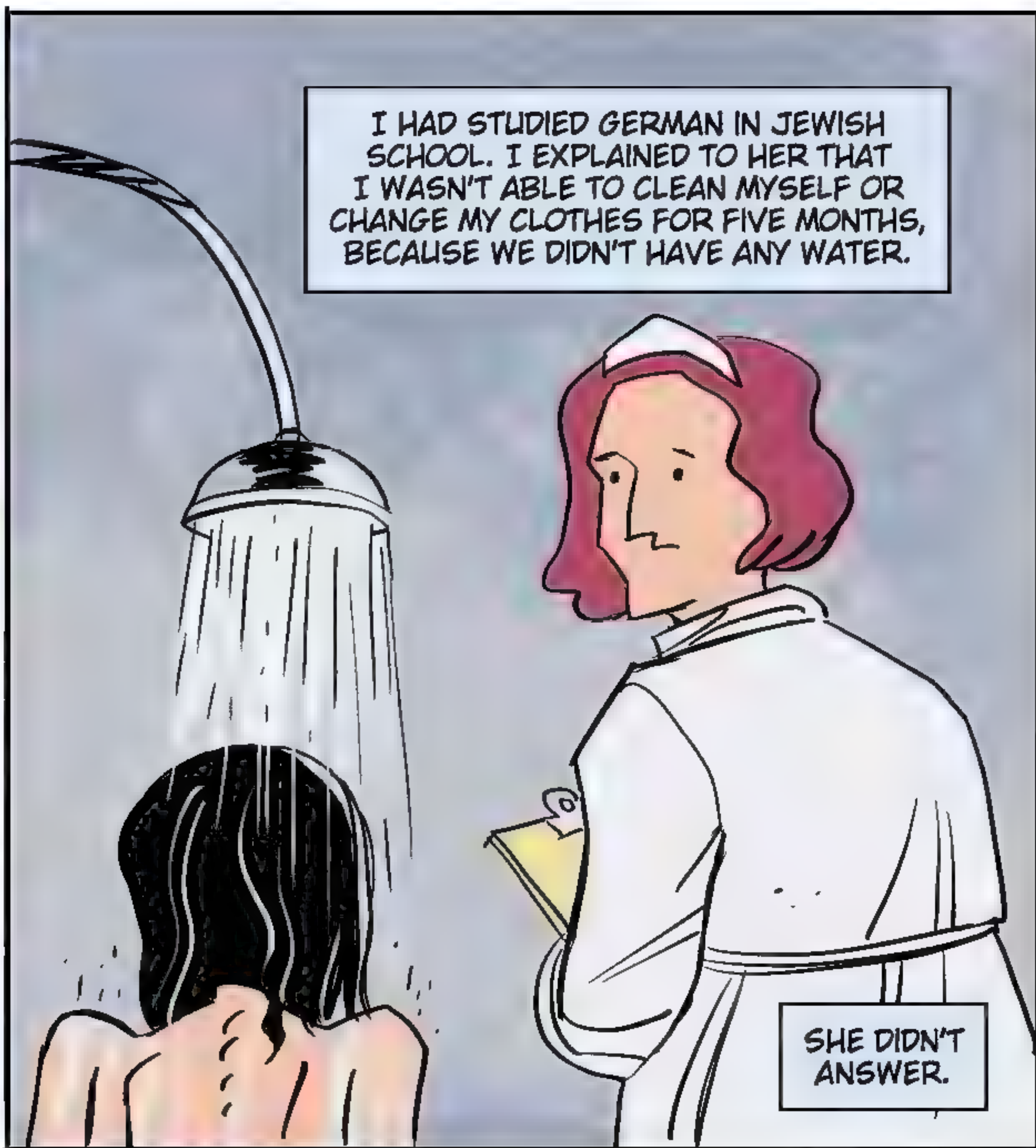
* SUSANNA LATER LEARNED THAT SHE WAS IN BERGEN-BELSEN AT THE SAME TIME THAT ANNE FRANK WAS. BERGEN-BELSEN WAS THE CAMP WHERE ANNE FRANK DIED.





WE WERE DELOUSED
AND BATHED.

WHAT
A DIRTY
CHILD!

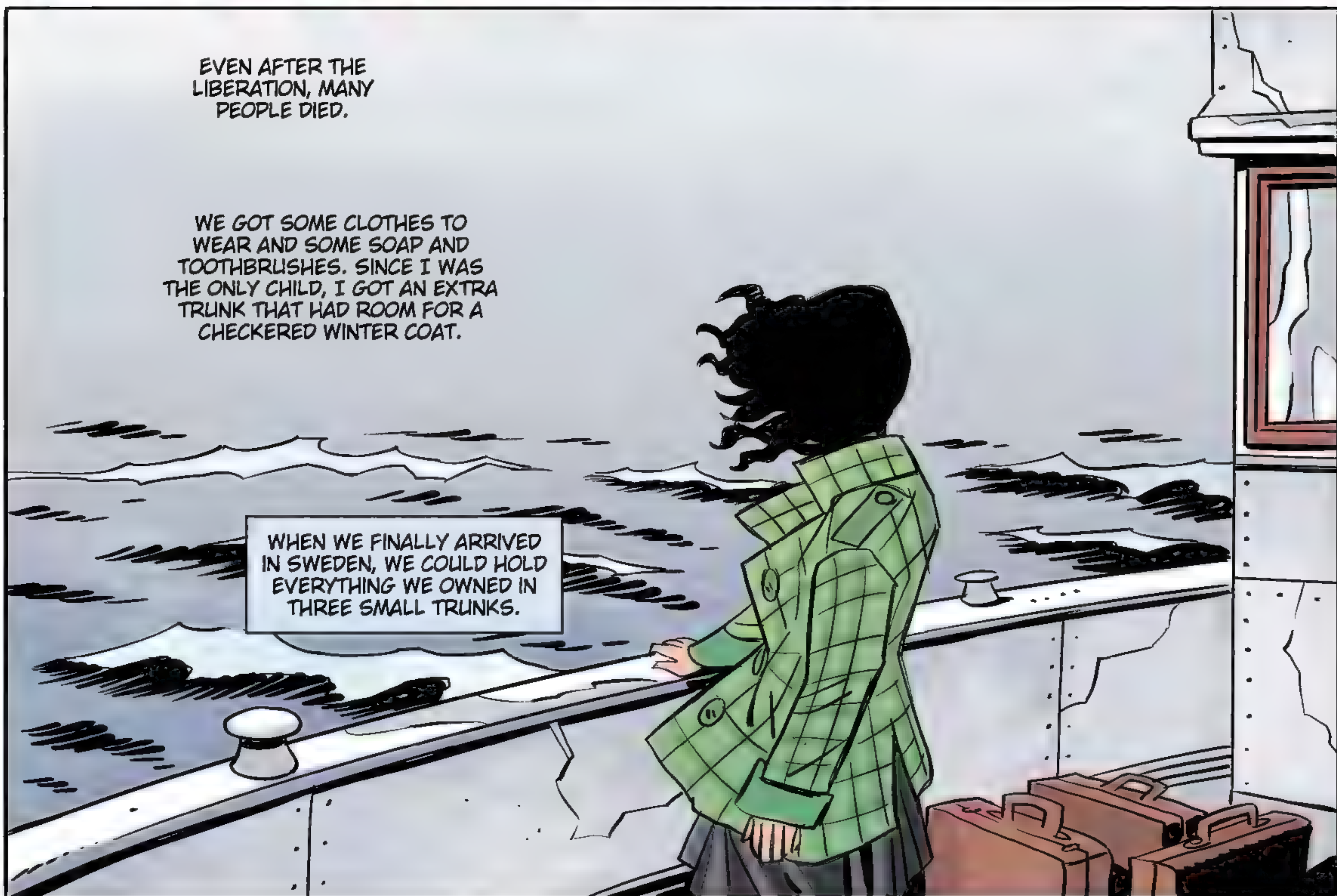


I HAD STUDIED GERMAN IN JEWISH
SCHOOL. I EXPLAINED TO HER THAT
I WASN'T ABLE TO CLEAN MYSELF OR
CHANGE MY CLOTHES FOR FIVE MONTHS,
BECAUSE WE DIDN'T HAVE ANY WATER.

SHE DIDN'T
ANSWER.



WE HAD NO CLOTHES SO
EVERYONE WALKED AROUND
SWADDLED IN BLANKETS. IT
LOOKED LIKE A GHOST TOWN.



EVEN AFTER THE
LIBERATION, MANY
PEOPLE DIED.

WE GOT SOME CLOTHES TO
WEAR AND SOME SOAP AND
TOOTHBRUSHES. SINCE I WAS
THE ONLY CHILD, I GOT AN EXTRA
TRUNK THAT HAD ROOM FOR A
CHECKERED WINTER COAT.

WHEN WE FINALLY ARRIVED
IN SWEDEN, WE COULD HOLD
EVERYTHING WE OWNED IN
THREE SMALL TRUNKS.

MY DAD'S JOURNAL IS KEPT
IN THE BERGEN-BELSEN
ARCHIVES. THEY ALSO HAVE
HIS GLASSES AT THE MUSEUM.





Susanna Christensen was one of the first survivors to travel around to schools telling the story of her experiences during the Holocaust. Wherever she goes, everyone listens carefully, and she's met with great appreciation. She believes it's important for young people today to meet those who experienced the war—especially today, when she feels that the hatred of Jews is increasing again. She is not afraid for her own sake anymore, but hopes that her descendants never have to experience any of the things that she did.

Emerich

I HAVE EXPERIENCED THE
UTMOST CONSEQUENCES
OF HATRED AND VIOLENCE.

I'VE BEEN A PRISONER IN FIVE
CONCENTRATION CAMPS. NOT A
SINGLE HUMAN BEING SHOULD
HAVE TO GO THROUGH OR SEE
THE THINGS THAT I HAVE
EXPERIENCED.

I WAS BORN IN WHAT WAS
THEN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
TODAY IT'S CALLED
VINOGRADOV, AND IT'S
A PART OF UKRAINE.

I HAD A BIG FAMILY. MUM
AND DAD, FOUR YOUNGER
SISTERS, A GRANDMOTHER,
SIX UNCLES, AND
TWENTY-FOUR COUSINS.

AFTER OUR PART OF THE COUNTRY
BECAME PART OF HUNGARY, OUR
LIVES BECAME MUCH HARDER. THE
ANTISEMITISM IN HUNGARY HAD
BEEN A PART OF THE COUNTRY'S
HISTORY FOR HUNDREDS OF
YEARS. SUDDENLY, IT WAS A
PART OF OUR LIVES TOO.

WE HOPED THAT THIS BAD
DREAM WOULD END. BUT
THINGS WOULD GET
WORSE. MUCH WORSE.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU.

WE SAW GERMAN SOLDIERS
AND OFFICERS. THEY KEPT
THEIR DOGS READY TO JUMP
ON US AT ANY MOMENT.

THEY MADE US FORM TWO LINES,
ONE FOR MEN AND ONE FOR
WOMEN AND CHILDREN. THEY TOLD
US TO MOVE FORWARD SLOWLY.

AHEAD OF US, AN ELEGANT MAN STOOD
ON A KIND OF STAGE. HE WAS AN
OFFICER. HE DIDN'T SAY A WORD. HE
JUST POINTED TO THE RIGHT OR LEFT.
AS WE CAME CLOSER WE SAW HIS BLUE,
ICE COLD EYES, STARING AT US.

LATER WE FOUND OUT THAT THE MAN
DECIDING WHO LIVED AND WHO DIED
WAS DR. JOSEF MENGELE. ELDERLY
PEOPLE, PREGNANT WOMEN, CHILDREN,
AND SICK PEOPLE, TO THE LEFT.

THOSE IN GOOD CONDITION, TO THE
RIGHT. MY DAD HAD BEEN WOUNDED
IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR, SO HE HAD
A LIMP. I SQUEEZED HIS ARM HARD
AND TRIED TO HOLD HIM UP SO THEY
WOULDN'T NOTICE. WE GOT AWAY
WITH IT AND ENDED UP ON THE RIGHT
SIDE TOGETHER. MY MOTHER AND
SIBLINGS WERE IN THE OTHER LINE.



MUM AND MY YOUNGEST SISTERS, MAGDALENA AND JUDITH, WERE SELECTED TO LIVE.



FROM THEN ON, I WAS CALLED ONLY BY MY NUMBER. THE OFFICERS TOLD US TO SIT DOWN AND WAIT.

WE COULD SEE A HIGH CHIMNEY.

AFTER AROUND FOUR WEEKS
WE MOVED TO A SMALLER
WORKING CAMP. OUR JOB
WAS TO BREAK ROCKS.

MY DAD AND I USED
SLEDGEHAMMERS. WE
CARRIED THE SPLIT
STONES WITH OUR BARE
HANDS TO THE CARRIAGES.

THE STONES WERE USED FOR
ROAD CONSTRUCTION. IT WAS
HEAVY WORK AND ACCIDENTS
HAPPENED ALL THE TIME.

WE HAD SO LITTLE FOOD,
MANY DIED OF STARVATION.
THEY USED HUNGER TO
CONTROL THE PRISONERS.

WE WERE TIRED, WEAK,
AND HAD NOTHING
LEFT IN US TO RESIST.

OUR CAMP
COMMANDER'S
NAME WAS WULF.

HE'D CALL US SWINE
AND DOGS, AND HIT US
WITH HIS WOODEN CLUB.

HE SHOWERED US WITH HATRED.
SOMETIMES, HE'D PUT SOMEONE
OUTSIDE ALL NIGHT AND MAKE
THEM STAND IN A BARREL FULL
OF ICE-COLD WATER.

ALL THE WHILE, HE'D LOVE AND
ADORE HIS GERMAN SHEPHERD.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE WAR ENDED THE GERMANS STILL BELIEVED THEY WERE WINNING. RATHER THAN LEAVING US IN THE CAMP, THEY FORCED US TO FLEE WITH THEM.

THERE WAS A RUMOR THAT ANYONE LEFT BEHIND WOULD EITHER BE TAKEN TO ANOTHER CAMP OR SHOT.

MY DAD WAS SUPPOSED TO BE LEFT BEHIND, BUT I TOOK HIM BY THE HAND AND DRAGGED HIM OUT...

NOBODY NOTICED. "AS LONG AS I LIVE," I TOLD HIM, "WE'LL BE TOGETHER." DAD GOT WEAKER AND WEAKER.



I HELD HIM CLOSE UNDER HIS ARM AS WE KEPT MARCHING WITH THE CROWD.

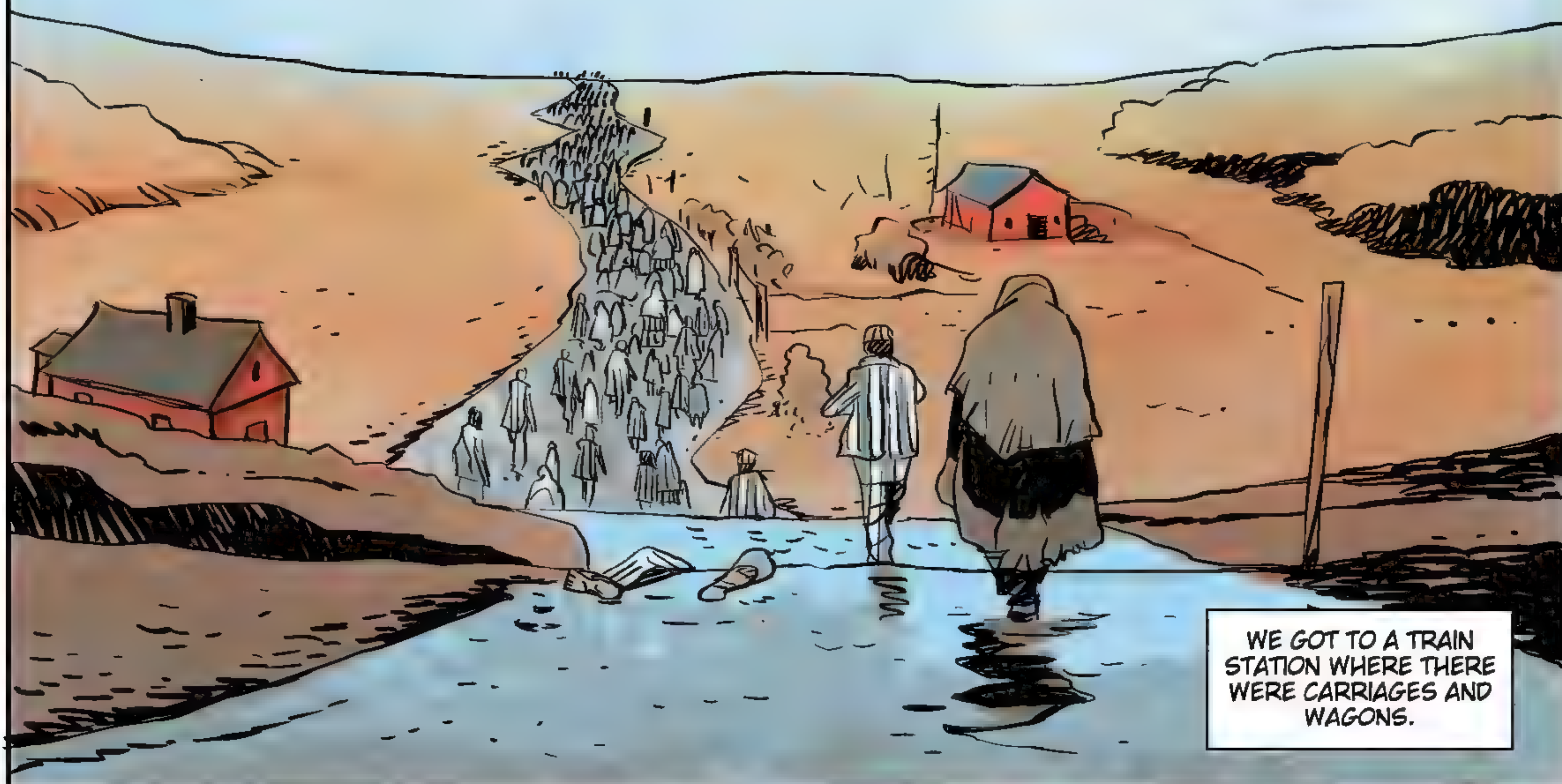
A SOLDIER APPROACHED US AND SAID THAT A HORSE AND CARRIAGE WAS IN THE BACK TO HOLD THE WEAK PEOPLE.

MY DAD WAS SO EXHAUSTED HE IMMEDIATELY SAID YES.

THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM.

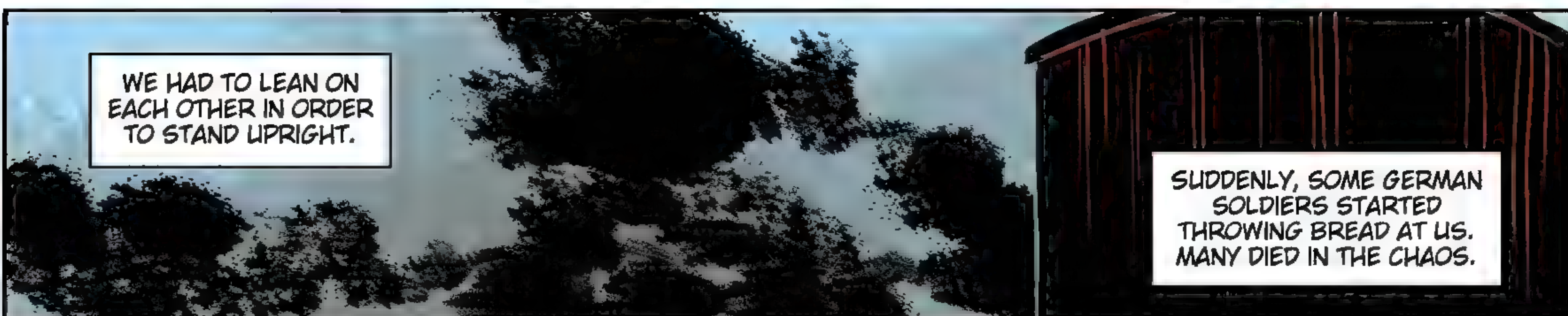


LATER I FOUND OUT THAT WE WERE AMONG ABOUT THIRTY THOUSAND PRISONERS MARCHING. IN HISTORY BOOKS IT'S OFTEN CALLED THE MARCH OF DEATH. THERE WERE ONLY A FEW THOUSAND SURVIVORS OUT OF ALL OF US PRISONERS.



WE GOT TO A TRAIN STATION WHERE THERE WERE CARRIAGES AND WAGONS.

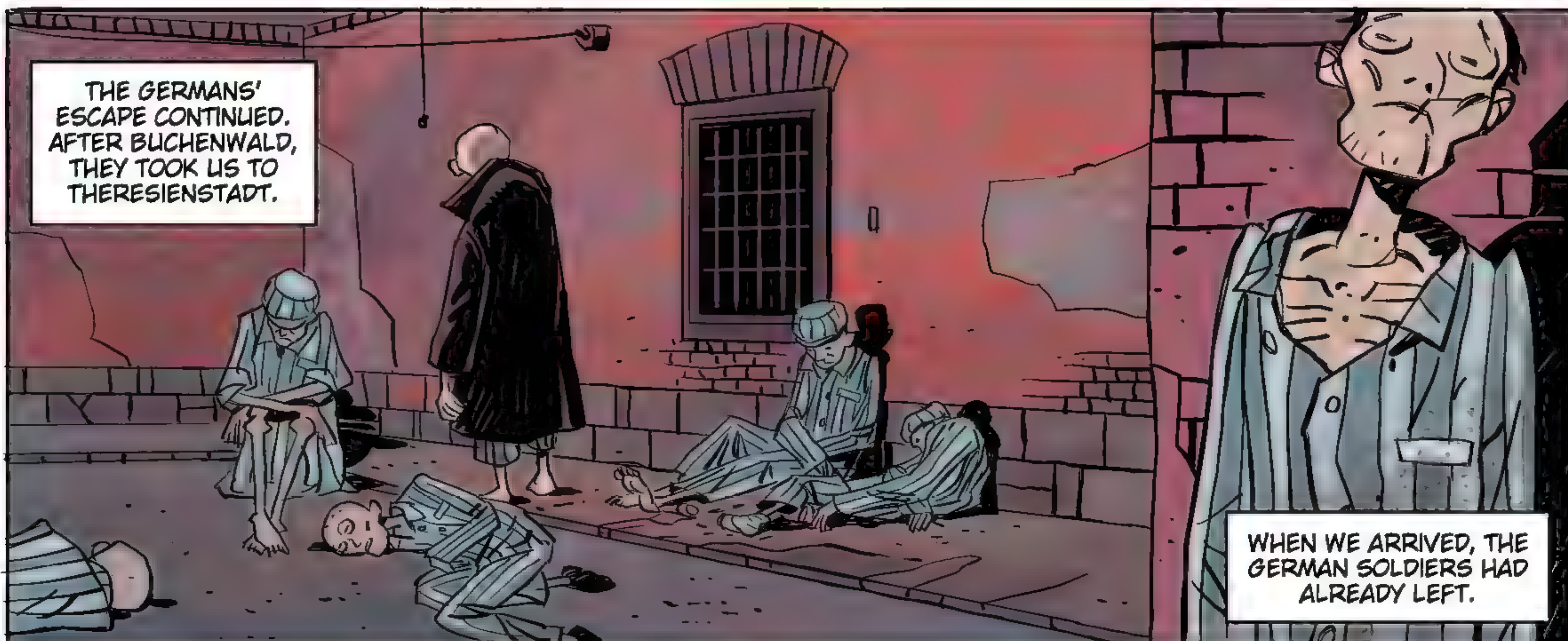
WE HAD TO LEAN ON EACH OTHER IN ORDER TO STAND UPRIGHT.



SUDDENLY, SOME GERMAN SOLDIERS STARTED THROWING BREAD AT US. MANY DIED IN THE CHAOS.

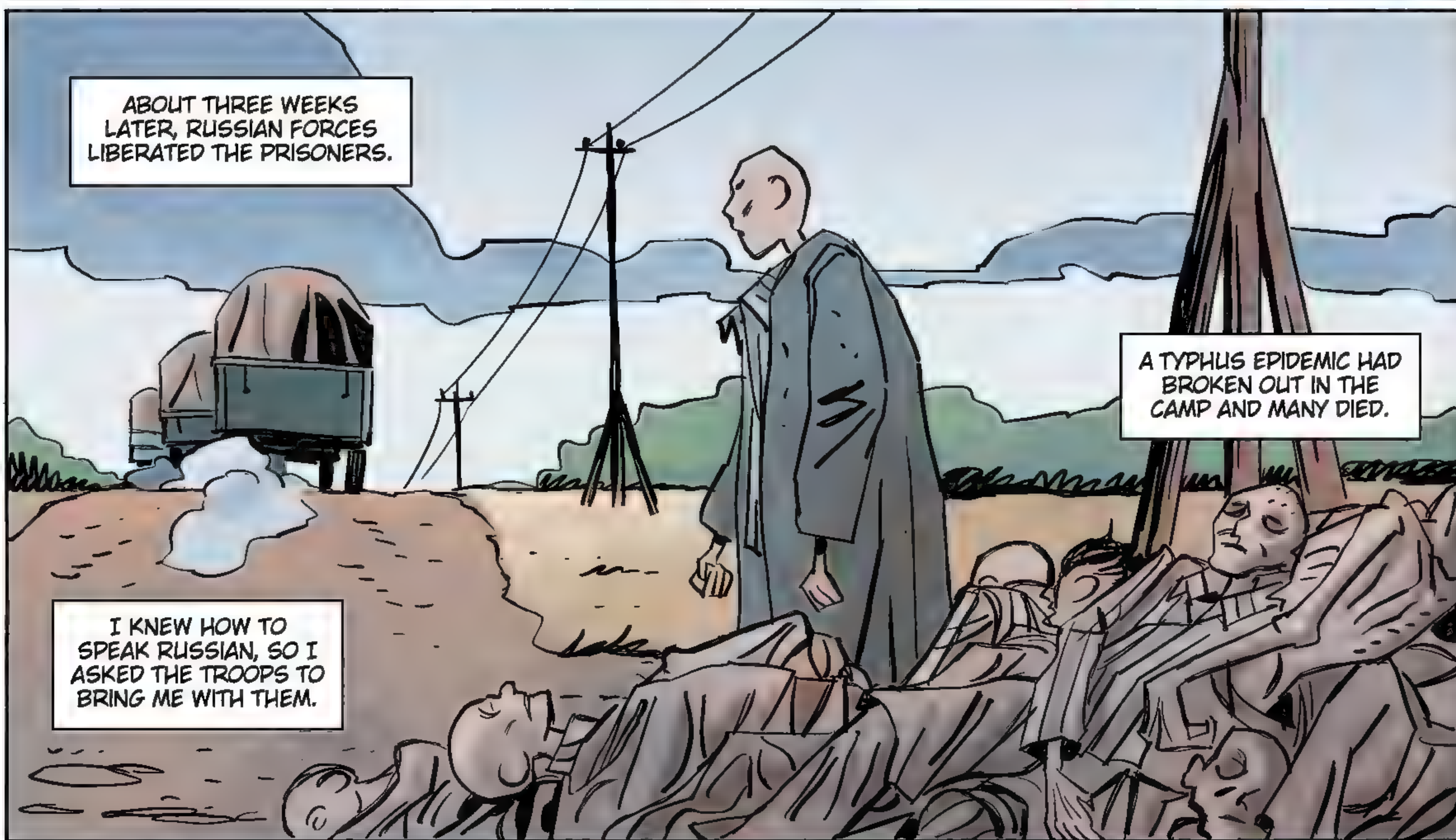
WE ARRIVED IN BUCHENWALD, A NOTORIOUS CONCENTRATION CAMP WHERE EVERYONE WAS WAITING FOR THE END TO COME.





THE GERMANS' ESCAPE CONTINUED. AFTER BUCHENWALD, THEY TOOK US TO THERESIENSTADT.

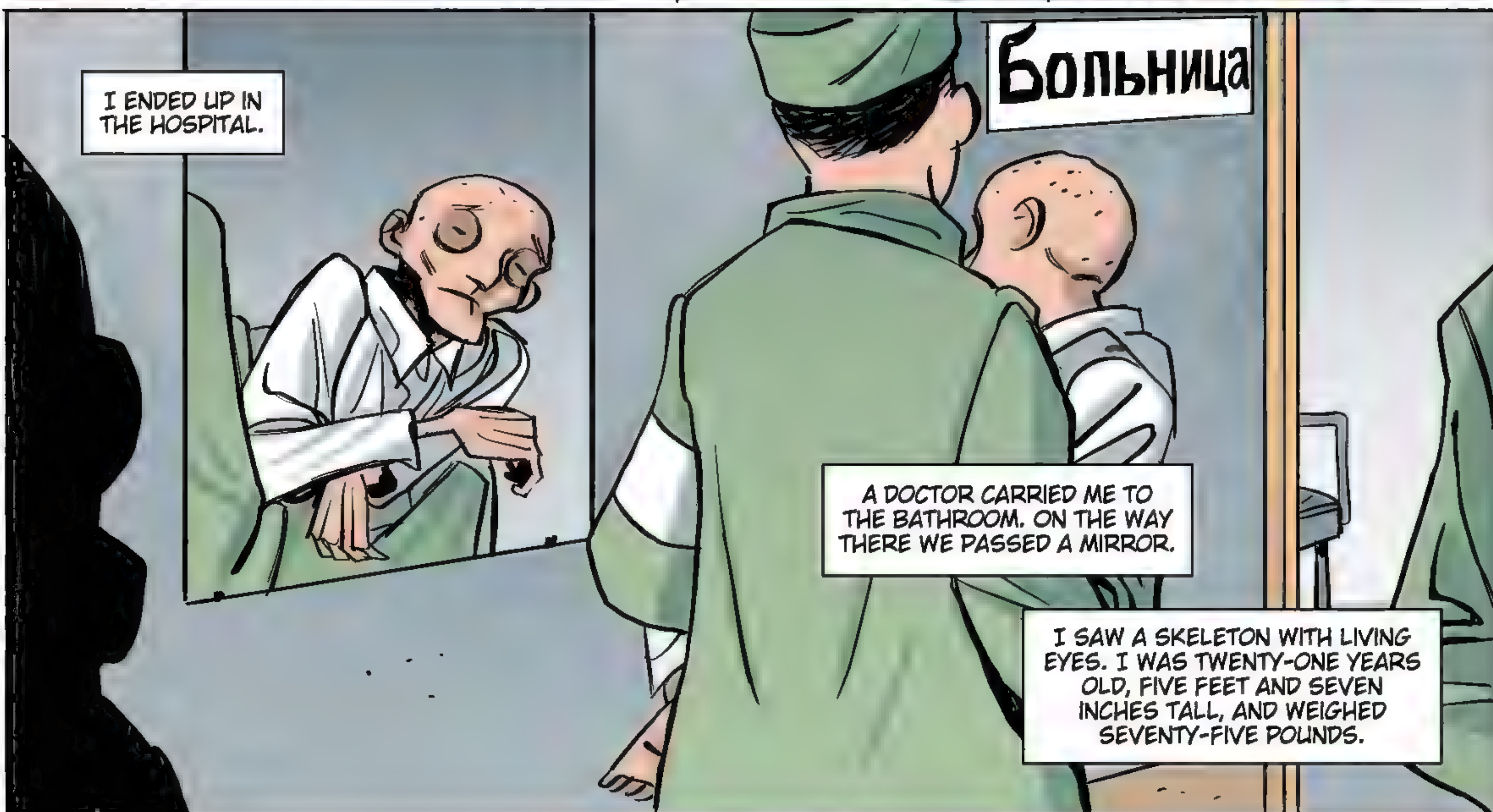
WHEN WE ARRIVED, THE GERMAN SOLDIERS HAD ALREADY LEFT.



ABOUT THREE WEEKS LATER, RUSSIAN FORCES LIBERATED THE PRISONERS.

A TYPHUS EPIDEMIC HAD BROKEN OUT IN THE CAMP AND MANY DIED.

I KNEW HOW TO SPEAK RUSSIAN, SO I ASKED THE TROOPS TO BRING ME WITH THEM.

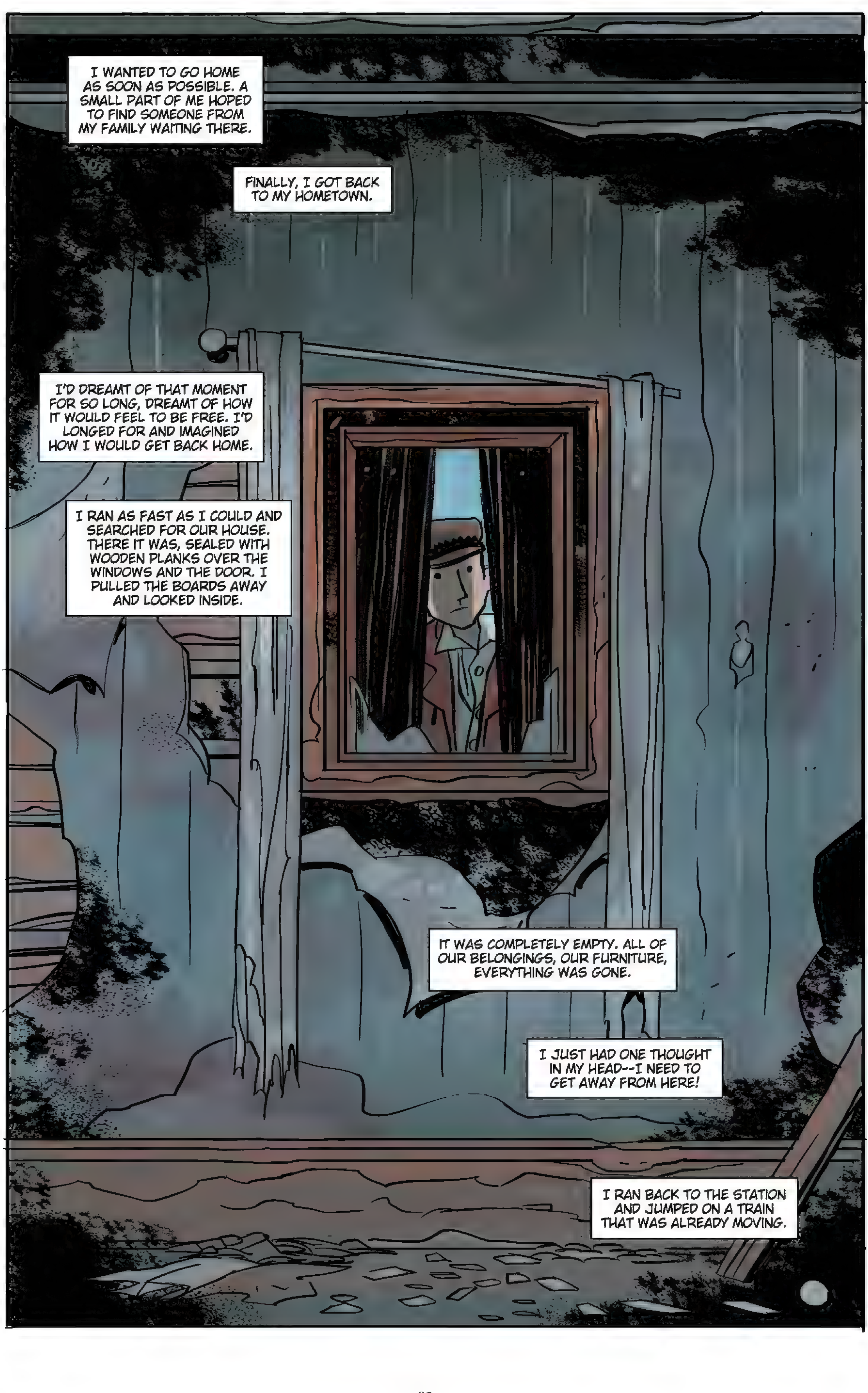


I ENDED UP IN THE HOSPITAL.

Больница

A DOCTOR CARRIED ME TO THE BATHROOM. ON THE WAY THERE WE PASSED A MIRROR.

I SAW A SKELETON WITH LIVING EYES. I WAS TWENTY-ONE YEARS OLD, FIVE FEET AND SEVEN INCHES TALL, AND WEIGHED SEVENTY-FIVE POUNDS.

A man with a flat cap and a light-colored jacket is looking out of a window. The window is framed by dark curtains. The scene is dark and rainy, with rain falling in vertical streaks. The background shows a dark, silhouetted landscape with trees and a body of water. The overall mood is somber and reflective.

I WANTED TO GO HOME
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. A
SMALL PART OF ME HOPED
TO FIND SOMEONE FROM
MY FAMILY WAITING THERE.

FINALLY, I GOT BACK
TO MY HOMETOWN.

I'D DREAMT OF THAT MOMENT
FOR SO LONG, DREAMT OF HOW
IT WOULD FEEL TO BE FREE. I'D
LONGED FOR AND IMAGINED
HOW I WOULD GET BACK HOME.

I RAN AS FAST AS I COULD AND
SEARCHED FOR OUR HOUSE.
THERE IT WAS, SEALED WITH
WOODEN PLANKS OVER THE
WINDOWS AND THE DOOR. I
PULLED THE BOARDS AWAY
AND LOOKED INSIDE.

IT WAS COMPLETELY EMPTY. ALL OF
OUR BELONGINGS, OUR FURNITURE,
EVERYTHING WAS GONE.

I JUST HAD ONE THOUGHT
IN MY HEAD--I NEED TO
GET AWAY FROM HERE!

I RAN BACK TO THE STATION
AND JUMPED ON A TRAIN
THAT WAS ALREADY MOVING.

I DIDN'T CARE WHERE
THE TRAIN WAS GOING.
I TRAVELED FOR WEEKS
THROUGH A BROKEN EUROPE.

I PASSED THROUGH HUNGARY AND
AUSTRIA UNTIL I REACHED A LITTLE
TOWN IN THE SOUTH OF ITALY. I
FOUND A GROUP OF JEWISH KIDS
WHO HAD LIVED THROUGH SIMILAR
HORRORS AS ME.

WE DECIDED TO GO TO
PALESTINE. A FEW DAYS
BEFORE WE LEFT, I GOT SICK.
I'D CAUGHT TUBERCULOSIS
AND ENDED UP IN HOSPITAL.

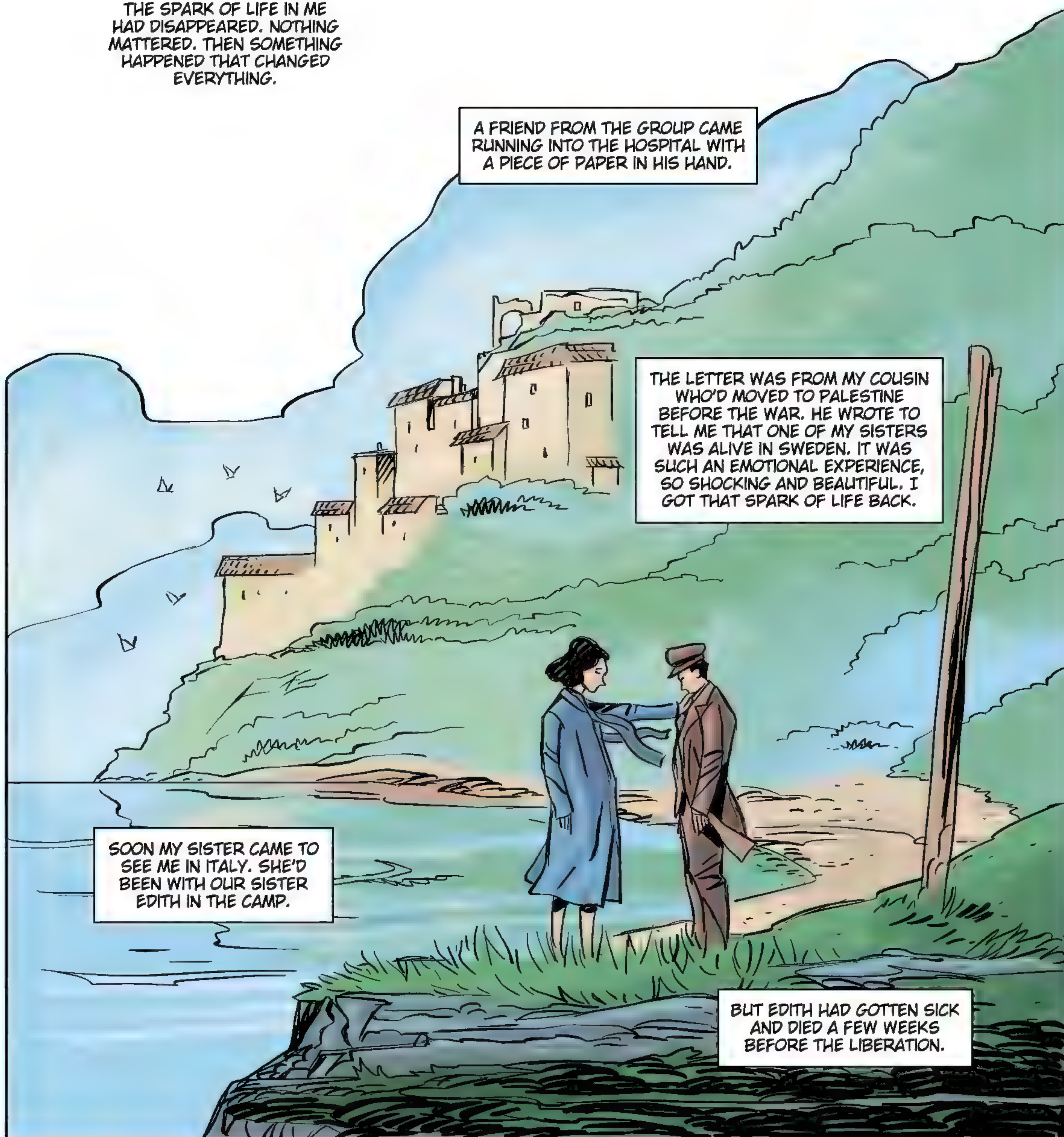
THE SPARK OF LIFE IN ME
HAD DISAPPEARED. NOTHING
MATTERED. THEN SOMETHING
HAPPENED THAT CHANGED
EVERYTHING.

A FRIEND FROM THE GROUP CAME
RUNNING INTO THE HOSPITAL WITH
A PIECE OF PAPER IN HIS HAND.

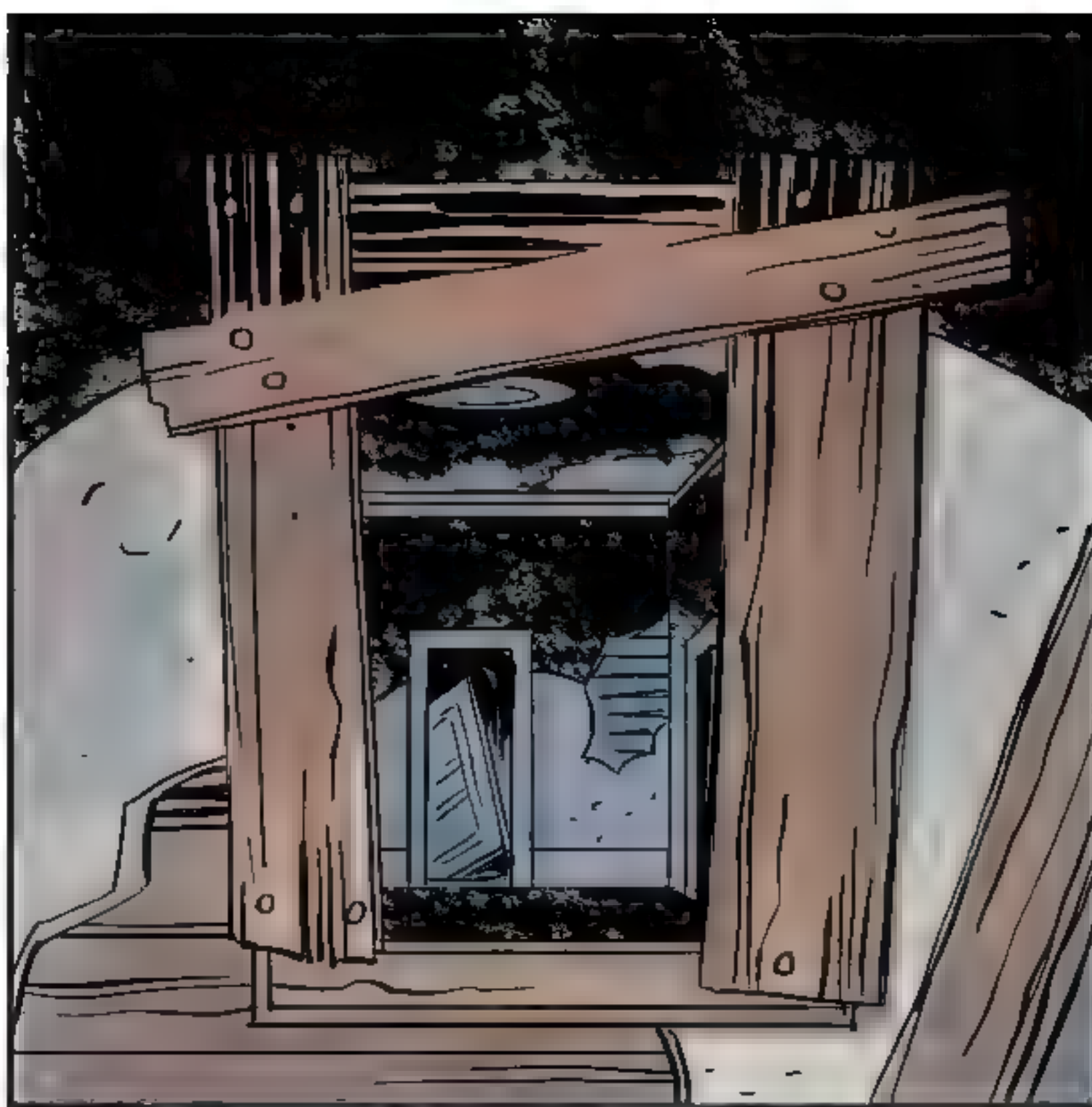
THE LETTER WAS FROM MY COUSIN
WHO'D MOVED TO PALESTINE
BEFORE THE WAR. HE WROTE TO
TELL ME THAT ONE OF MY SISTERS
WAS ALIVE IN SWEDEN. IT WAS
SUCH AN EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE,
SO SHOCKING AND BEAUTIFUL. I
GOT THAT SPARK OF LIFE BACK.

SOON MY SISTER CAME TO
SEE ME IN ITALY. SHE'D
BEEN WITH OUR SISTER
EDITH IN THE CAMP.

BUT EDITH HAD GOTTEN SICK
AND DIED A FEW WEEKS
BEFORE THE LIBERATION.



THE NAZIS COULD NEVER TAKE
THE LOVE THAT I'D EXPERIENCED
AS A CHILD AWAY FROM ME.





Emerich Roth arrived in Sweden in 1950, first and foremost to be with his sister Elisabeth. He studied and became a social worker and therapist. He has worked at prisons and as operating chief at a rehabilitation center for abused youth. He wanted to use his experience to help others. Emerich believes that knowledge of the Holocaust can teach us about the future. A generation without historical education will be defenseless in preventing history repeating itself.

Elisabeth

MY MOM DIDN'T HAVE MUCH FREE TIME. SHE WAS FULLY PREOCCUPIED WITH ME AND MY FOUR SIBLINGS AND TAKING CARE OF OUR HOME.

SOMETIMES I WOULD TRAVEL TO MY DAD'S COUSIN ILONA'S HOME. I HELPED HER TAKE CARE OF HER LITTLE BOY TOMIK. I LOVED HIM SO MUCH.

WE LIVED IN TERRACED HOUSES WITH MOSTLY JEWISH NEIGHBORS. WE WOULD LISTEN TO OUR NEIGHBORS' RADIOS IN THE COURTYARD.



THAT'S HOW WE HEARD THE NEWS. I REMEMBER SENSING THAT SOMETHING WAS VERY WRONG.

THEY ANNOUNCED THAT ALL
JEWS HAD TO LEAVE THEIR
HOMES AND MOVE TO
ANOTHER STREET WHERE
MOST JEWS ALREADY LIVED.



WE DIDN'T KNOW YET THAT
THE SAME THING HAD BEEN
HAPPENING IN CITIES ALL OVER
OUR COUNTRY. WE MOVED
TO THE GHETTO IN 1944.



I REMEMBER WALKING
THROUGH TOWN, AND OUR
NEIGHBORS STANDING BY
THE SIDE OF THE ROAD,
JUST WATCHING US.

COMPLETELY
SILENT.



THERE WERE SO MANY
OF US WHEN WE GOT
TO AUSCHWITZ.

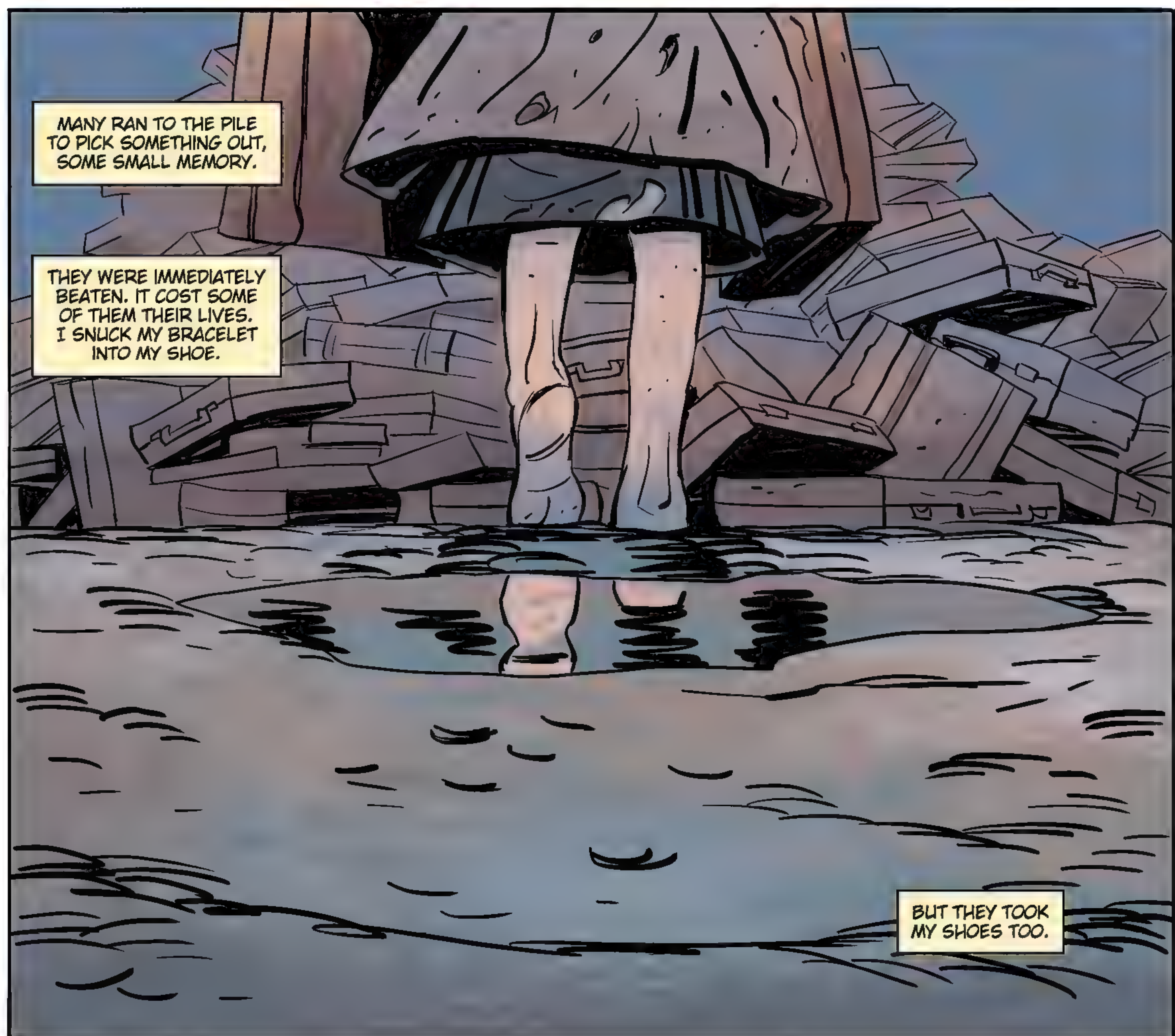


I DIDN'T THINK. I
JUST FOLLOWED
EVERYONE ELSE.

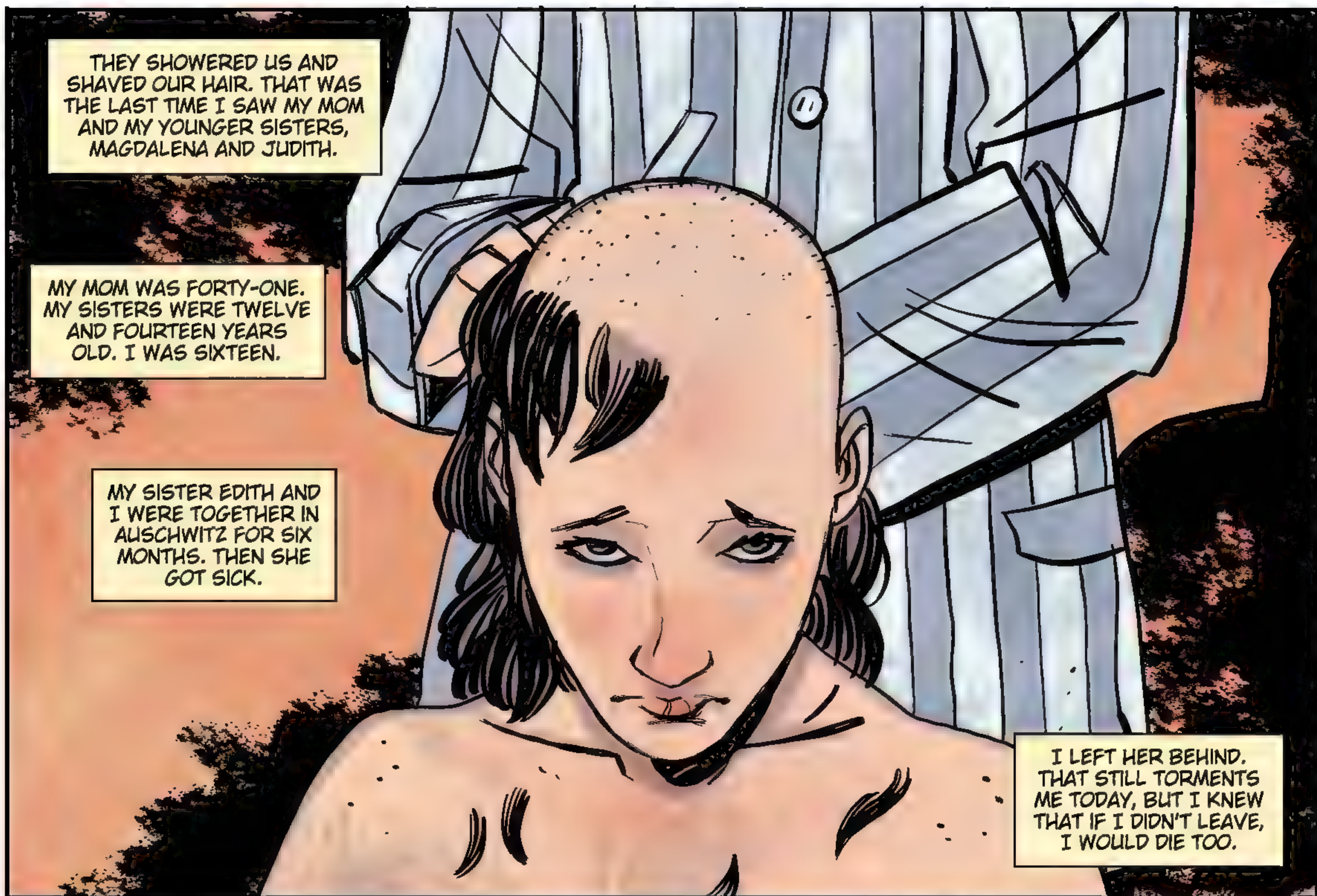
THEY TOLD US TO THROW
OUR BAGS INTO A PILE.

MANY RAN TO THE PILE
TO PICK SOMETHING OUT,
SOME SMALL MEMORY.

THEY WERE IMMEDIATELY
BEATEN. IT COST SOME
OF THEM THEIR LIVES.
I SNUCK MY BRACELET
INTO MY SHOE.



BUT THEY TOOK
MY SHOES TOO.

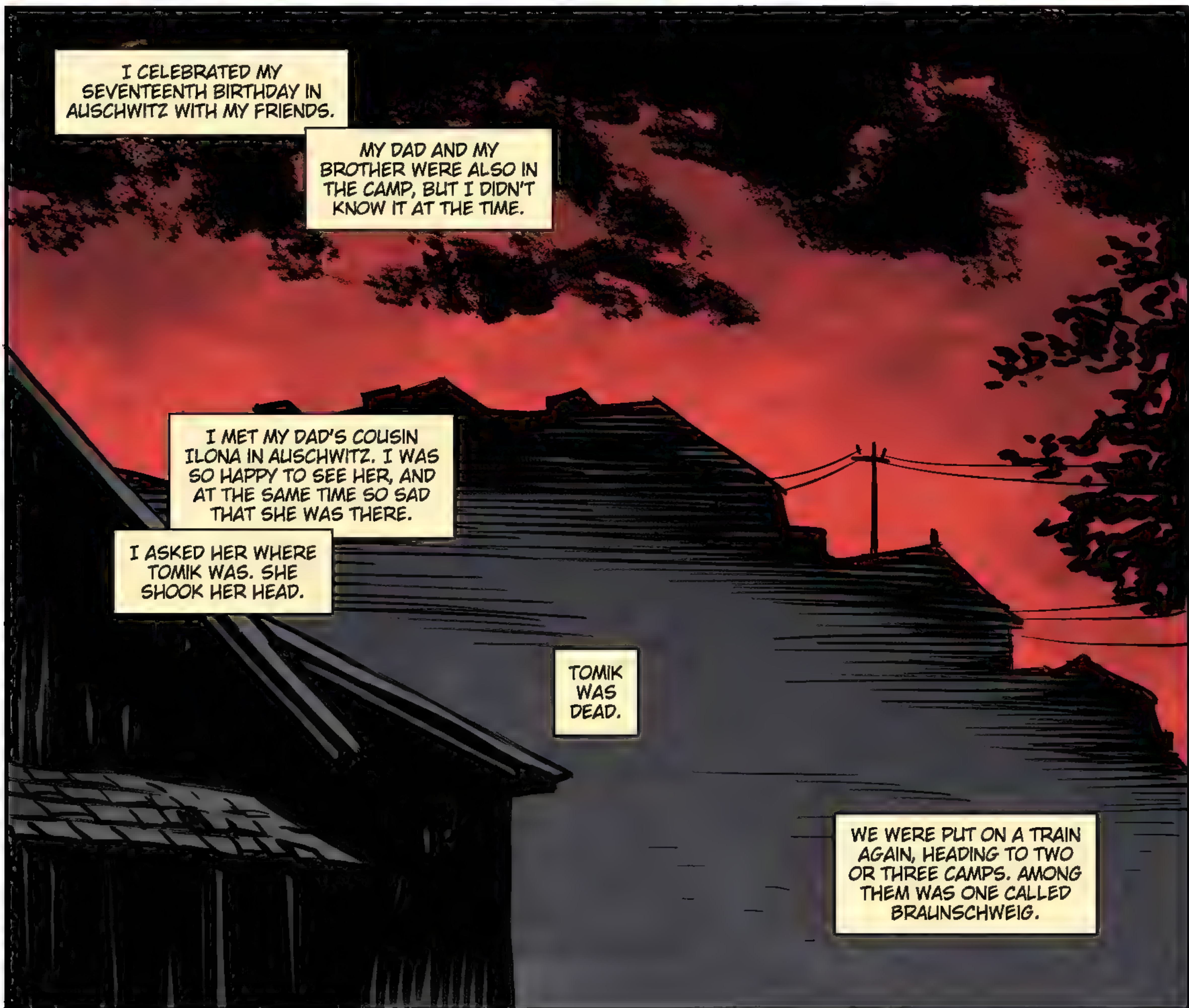


THEY SHOWERED US AND SHAVED OUR HAIR. THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW MY MOM AND MY YOUNGER SISTERS, MAGDALENA AND JUDITH.

MY MOM WAS FORTY-ONE. MY SISTERS WERE TWELVE AND FOURTEEN YEARS OLD. I WAS SIXTEEN.

MY SISTER EDITH AND I WERE TOGETHER IN AUSCHWITZ FOR SIX MONTHS. THEN SHE GOT SICK.

I LEFT HER BEHIND. THAT STILL TORMENTS ME TODAY, BUT I KNEW THAT IF I DIDN'T LEAVE, I WOULD DIE TOO.



I CELEBRATED MY SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY IN AUSCHWITZ WITH MY FRIENDS.

MY DAD AND MY BROTHER WERE ALSO IN THE CAMP, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME.

I MET MY DAD'S COUSIN ILONA IN AUSCHWITZ. I WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE HER, AND AT THE SAME TIME SO SAD THAT SHE WAS THERE.

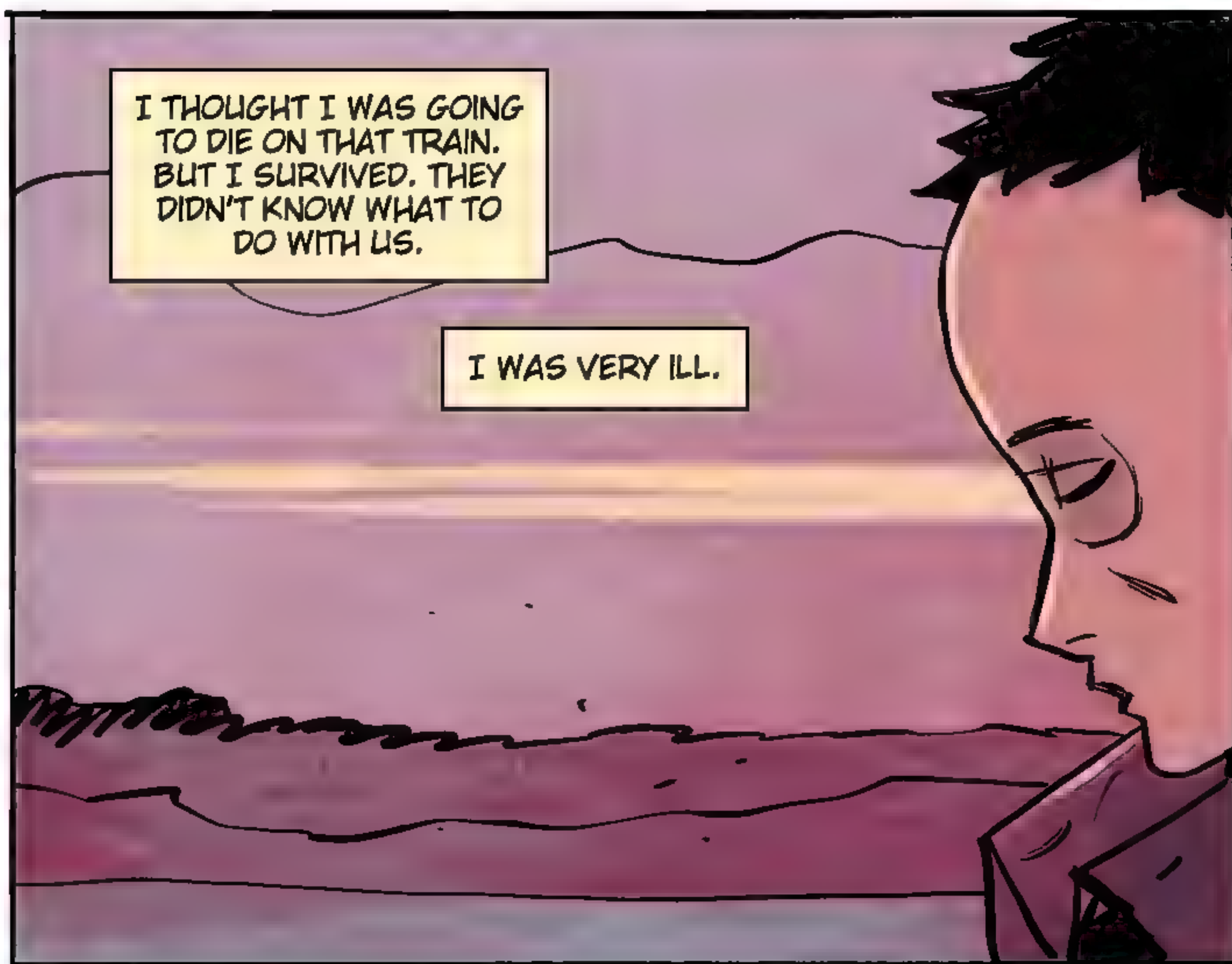
I ASKED HER WHERE TOMIK WAS. SHE SHOOK HER HEAD.

TOMIK WAS DEAD.

WE WERE PUT ON A TRAIN AGAIN, HEADING TO TWO OR THREE CAMPS. AMONG THEM WAS ONE CALLED BRAUNSCHWEIG.



WHEN THE WAR ENDED, WE WERE SENT AWAY ON A TRAIN. THAT TRAIN WENT AROUND EUROPE FOR TEN DAYS AND STOPPED AT THE DANISH BORDER.



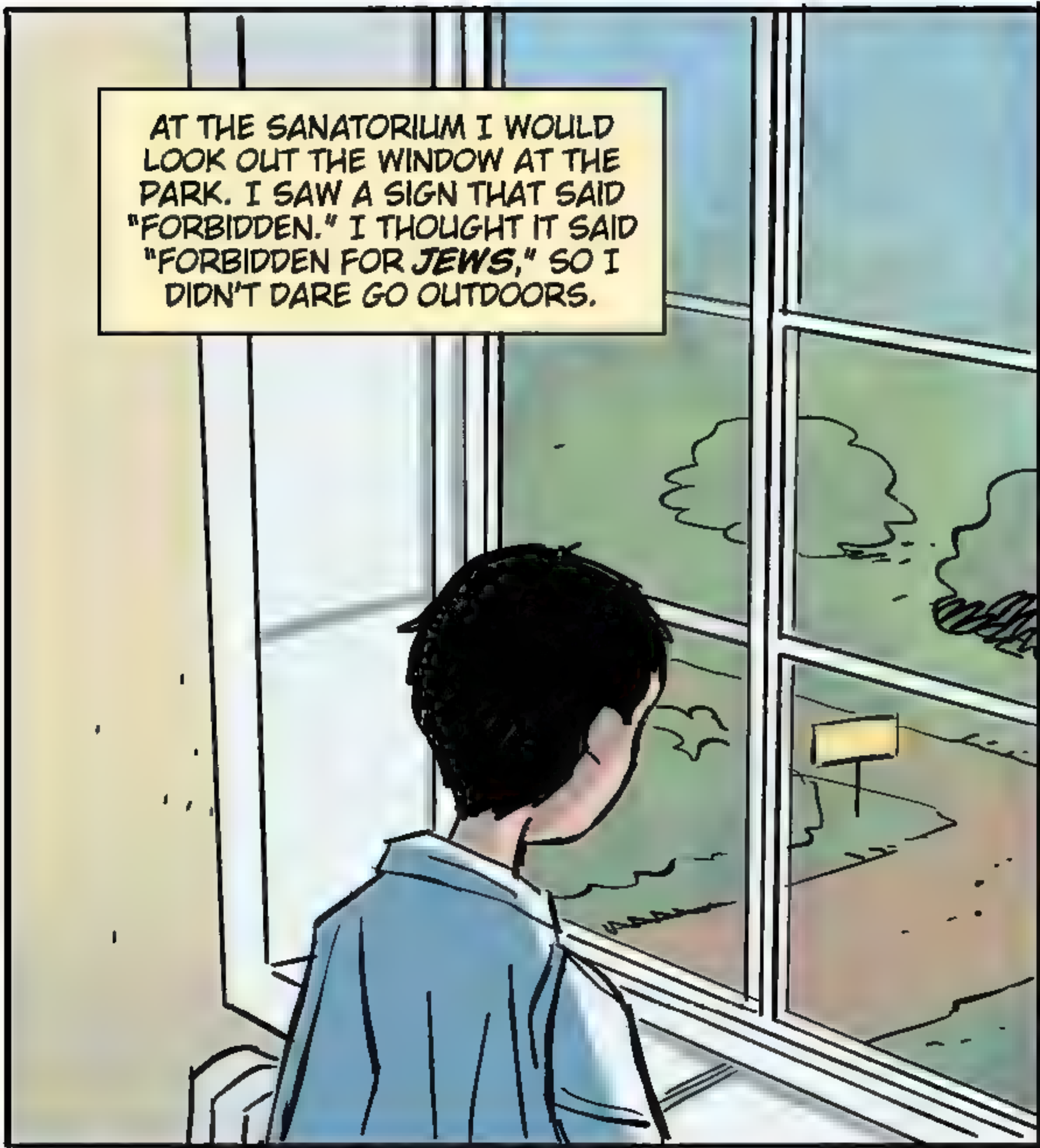
I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE ON THAT TRAIN. BUT I SURVIVED. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH US.

I WAS VERY ILL.



I DON'T KNOW EXACTLY HOW, BUT WE ARRIVED IN MALMOE, SWEDEN, AND AFTER THAT, IN A CITY CALLED VÄXJÖ. AND AFTER THAT, AT A SANATORIUM.

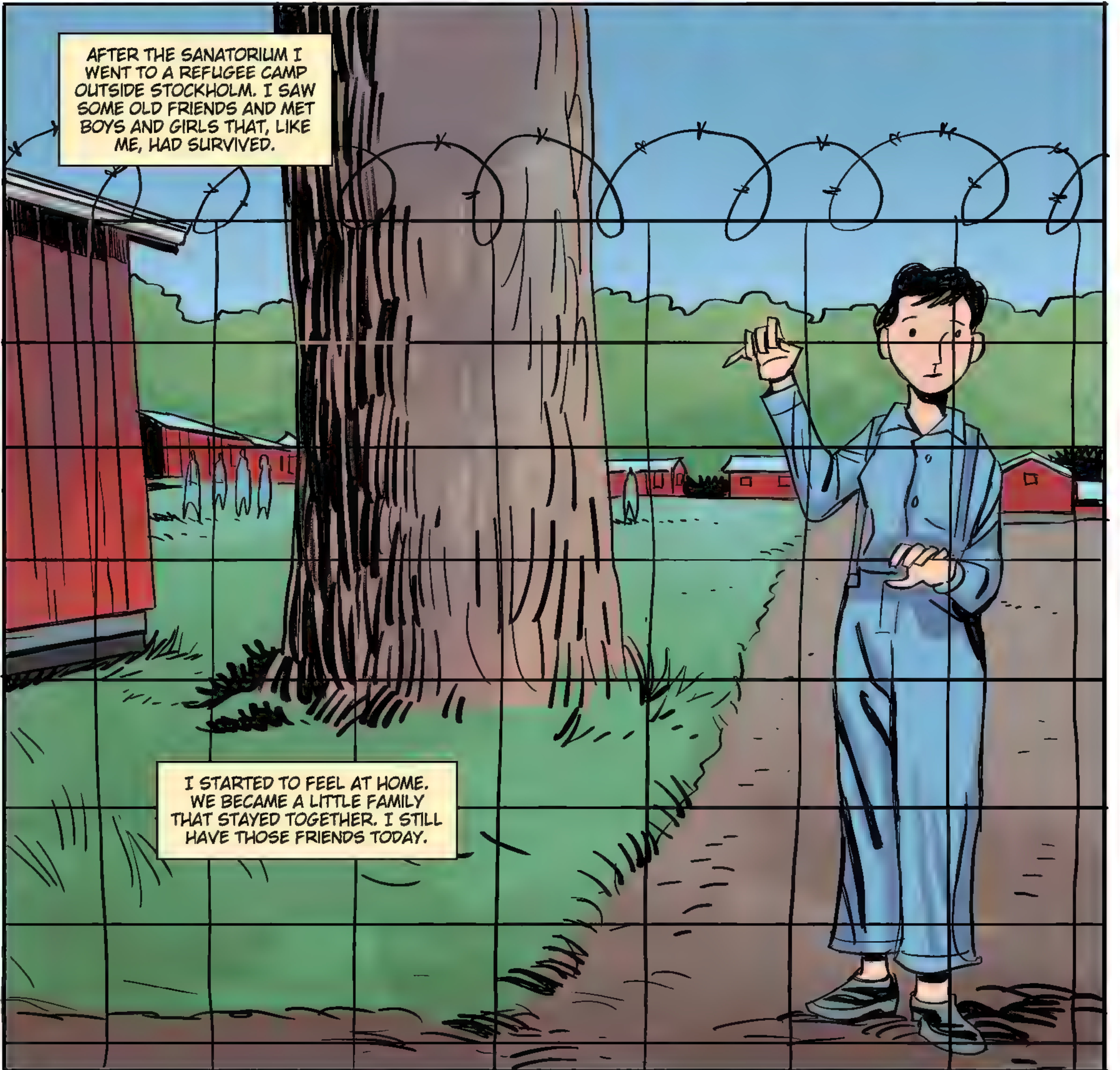
I WAS ALL ALONE WHEN I GOT TO SWEDEN.



AT THE SANATORIUM I WOULD LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AT THE PARK. I SAW A SIGN THAT SAID "FORBIDDEN." I THOUGHT IT SAID "FORBIDDEN FOR **JEW**S," SO I DIDN'T DARE GO OUTDOORS.



I THOUGHT IT WAS HAPPENING ALL OVER AGAIN. I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THAT THE WAR WAS OVER.



AFTER THE SANATORIUM I WENT TO A REFUGEE CAMP OUTSIDE STOCKHOLM. I SAW SOME OLD FRIENDS AND MET BOYS AND GIRLS THAT, LIKE ME, HAD SURVIVED.

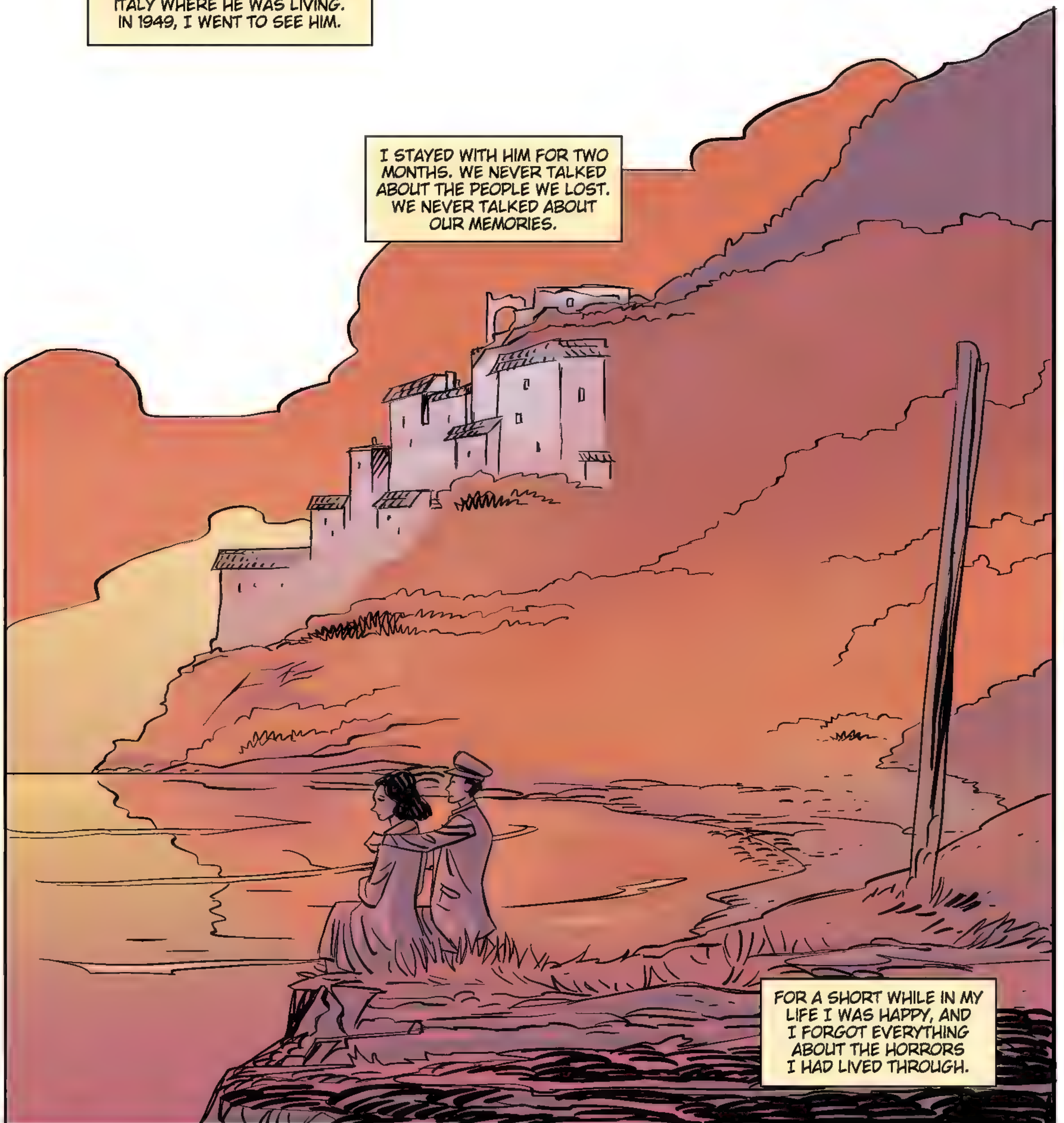
I STARTED TO FEEL AT HOME. WE BECAME A LITTLE FAMILY THAT STAYED TOGETHER. I STILL HAVE THOSE FRIENDS TODAY.

MY OLDER BROTHER
EMERICH AND I DIDN'T
KNOW WHERE EACH
OTHER WERE FOR A
WHOLE YEAR.

I WAITED FOR HIM TO COME
BACK TO ME. DURING MY TIME
IN SWEDEN I WROTE TO MY
COUSIN IN PALESTINE, AND
EMERICH WROTE TO HIM, TOO.

OUR COUSIN REALIZED THAT
EACH OF US DIDN'T KNOW THAT
THE OTHER HAD SURVIVED. HE
CONNECTED US AND AFTER THAT
EMERICH WROTE TO ME FROM
ITALY WHERE HE WAS LIVING.
IN 1949, I WENT TO SEE HIM.

I STAYED WITH HIM FOR TWO
MONTHS. WE NEVER TALKED
ABOUT THE PEOPLE WE LOST.
WE NEVER TALKED ABOUT
OUR MEMORIES.



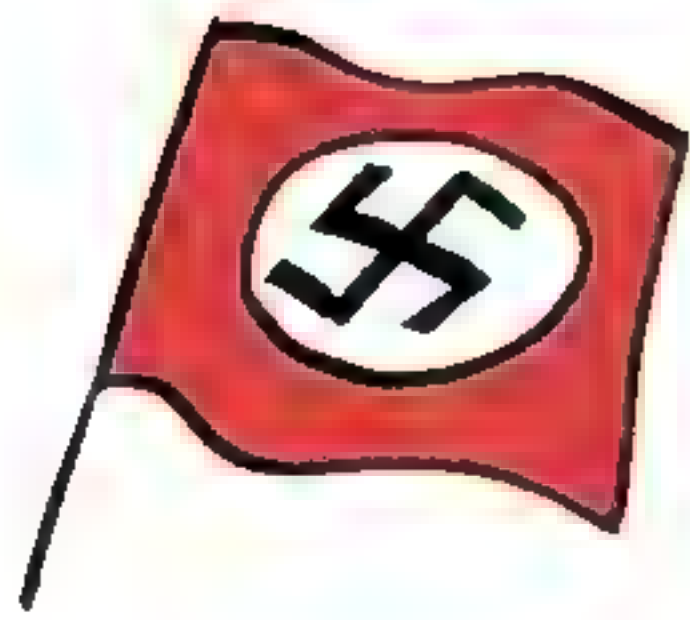
FOR A SHORT WHILE IN MY
LIFE I WAS HAPPY, AND
I FORGOT EVERYTHING
ABOUT THE HORRORS
I HAD LIVED THROUGH.

EVERYONE CARRIES
THEIR LITTLE LUGGAGE.
THIS WAS MINE.





Elisabeth Masur says that there are no words to explain the things that she has been through. She has tried to live a normal life, but her experiences have followed her everywhere. Elisabeth has two children, as well as grandchildren and great grandchildren. She says that she has had many happy times throughout her life, but she has never felt like a whole person.



TIMELINE



January 30, 1933

Adolf Hitler, leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party, becomes head of the government in Germany.

1933-1935

The German Parliament successfully introduces laws that isolate Jews from the rest of society, limiting their freedom and opportunities.

September 15, 1935

The Nürnberg (or Nuremberg) Laws are announced in Germany. Jews no longer have rights as German citizens. Marriage and sexual intercourse between Jews and non-Jews is prohibited.

March 12, 1938

German troops enter Austria.

October 28, 1938

17,000 Jews of Polish descent are forced to leave Germany for Poland.

November 9-10, 1938

Kristallnacht (Crystal Night): Jews are hunted and murdered, their property is destroyed, and synagogues are burned down all over Germany.

March 15, 1939

Germany invades Czechoslovakia.

September 1, 1939

Germany attacks Poland and World War II breaks out. The day after, Italy announces an alliance with Germany. Great Britain and France declare war against Germany on September 3. The Swedish government announces neutrality in the ongoing war.

September 17, 1939

The Soviet Union invades Poland from the east.

September 21, 1939

In Poland, Jews are transferred by force to specific areas called ghettos.

December 1, 1939

All Jews living in Poland must carry the Star of David visibly on their person. Later, that will include all Jews in Germany and in German-occupied territories.

1940

Germany invades Norway and Denmark. Sweden allows Germany to transport soldiers and weapons to and from Norway through Sweden. German troops invade Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. They continue onto France and occupy Paris.

German troops attack Britain. Large parts of London are destroyed by German bombings.

June 21, 1941

Germany attacks the Soviet Union.

December 7, 1941

The Japanese air force attacks the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor. Together with their Allies, the U.S. declares war against Japan, Germany, and Italy.

1941-1942

Six extermination camps are established in Poland by the Germans. Among them is Auschwitz-Birkenau.

January 20, 1942

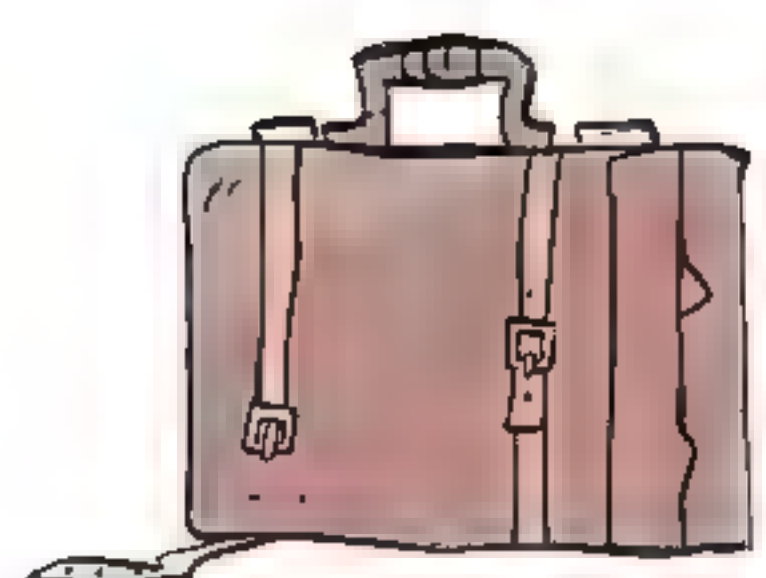
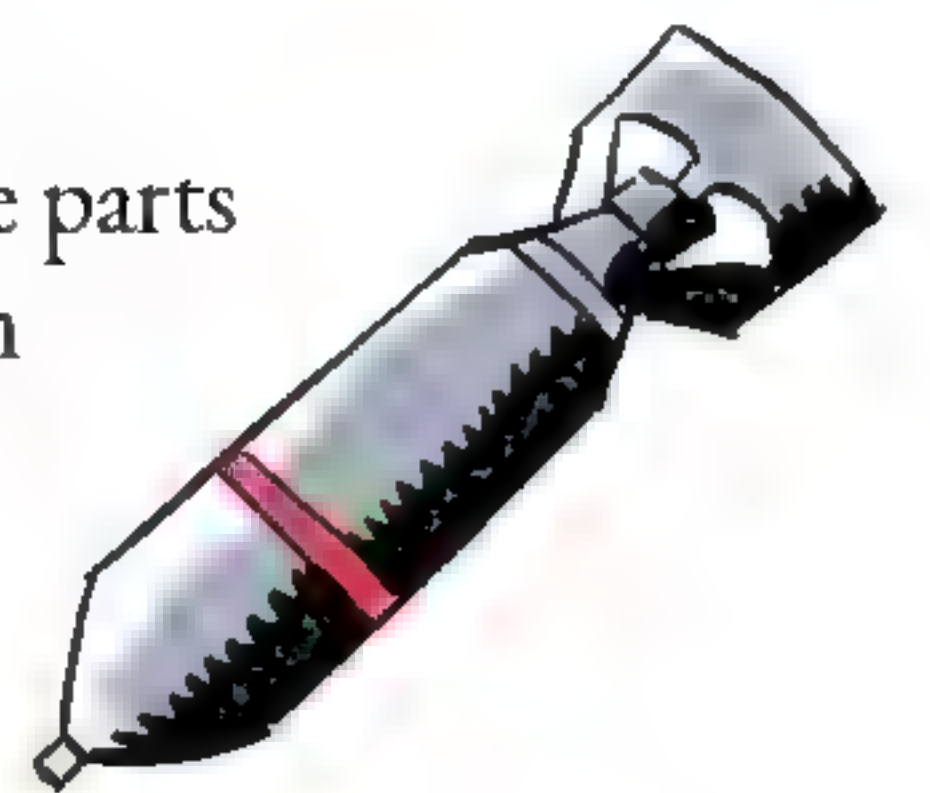
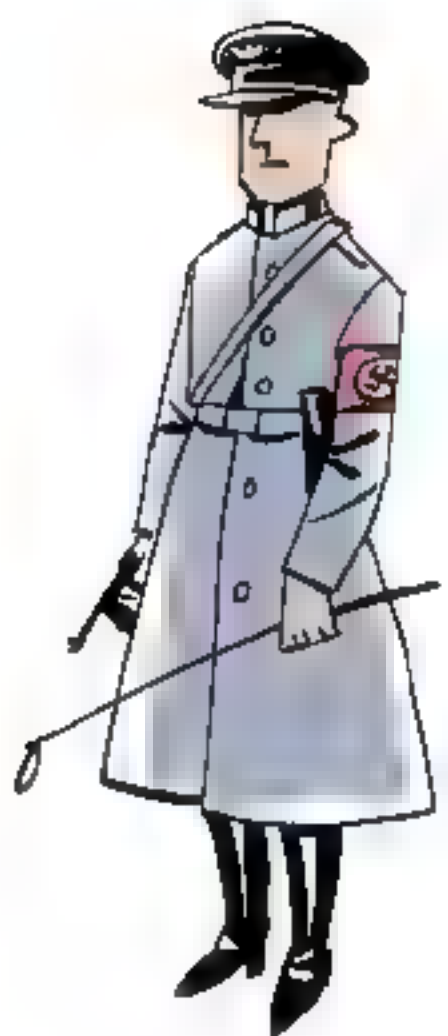
German officers gather outside Berlin for the Wannsee Conference, to discuss the "Final Solution" for the "Jewish issue." The plan: to systematically exterminate the Jewish people. 74,000 Jews are sent to extermination camps.

1942-1943

German troops deport Jews from ghettos to camps. Thousands are put to death in gas chambers and through forced labor.

February 2, 1943

Soviet troops defeat the German army at Stalingrad (today Volgograd).



April 19, 1943

The Warsaw Rising breaks out against German troops, the largest resistance in occupied Europe, with a significant symbolic impact.

October 1943

Sweden welcomes Danish Jews, a vast majority of which reach Sweden by boat.

March 19, 1944

Germany invades Hungary. Soon Jews are deported to Poland.

June 6, 1944

D-Day: Western Allied forces successfully march on Normandy, France. The troops continue fighting Nazi forces throughout Europe.

1944

The Soviet Union attacks German forces in Eastern Europe and makes their way through Poland where they discover several concentration camps.

Year's end, 1944-45

German forces in Poland escape the Soviet army, forcing more than 100,000 prisoners from the camps to follow, often by foot, back to Germany. Later this is called the March of Death, because of the large number of prisoners that died of exhaustion or were shot to death along the way.

1945

The Allies continue making their way through Europe, to Germany, discovering camps filled with prisoners, many so weak they die during liberation. Survivors reach Sweden with the White Buses, a Swedish rescue action coordinated by the Red Cross. Sweden welcomes 10,000 refugees to be rehabilitated at hospitals and refugee camps throughout the country.

January 27, 1945

The Soviet army liberates the prisoners, mostly sick or dying, in the Auschwitz

camps. In 2005, the United Nations declares January 27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

April 30, 1945

Adolf Hitler commits suicide.

May 7-8, 1945

Germany surrenders. The war is over in Europe.

July 17-August 2, 1945

The Allied powers disarm Germany, their war industries are destroyed, and those responsible for the crimes against humanity stand for an international military court of law. Germany is divided into four zones of occupation controlled by Britain, the U.S., France, and the Soviet Union.

Summer 1945

Throughout Europe, refugee camps are established to help prisoners and survivors of the Holocaust. Slowly, survivors find their way back into everyday life. Bureaus are established to help people find family and friends that also survived, and to help re-establish their lives.

August 1945

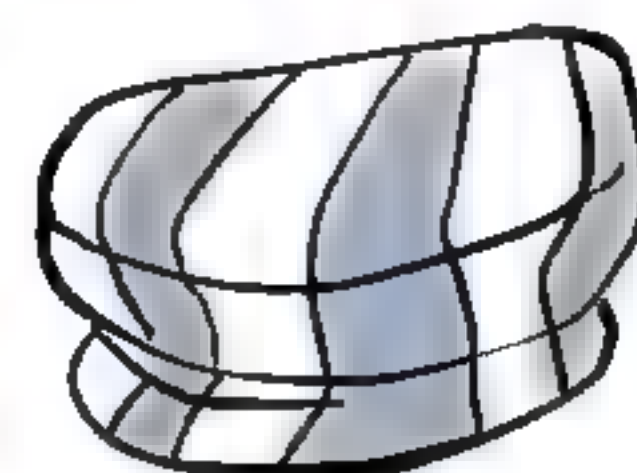
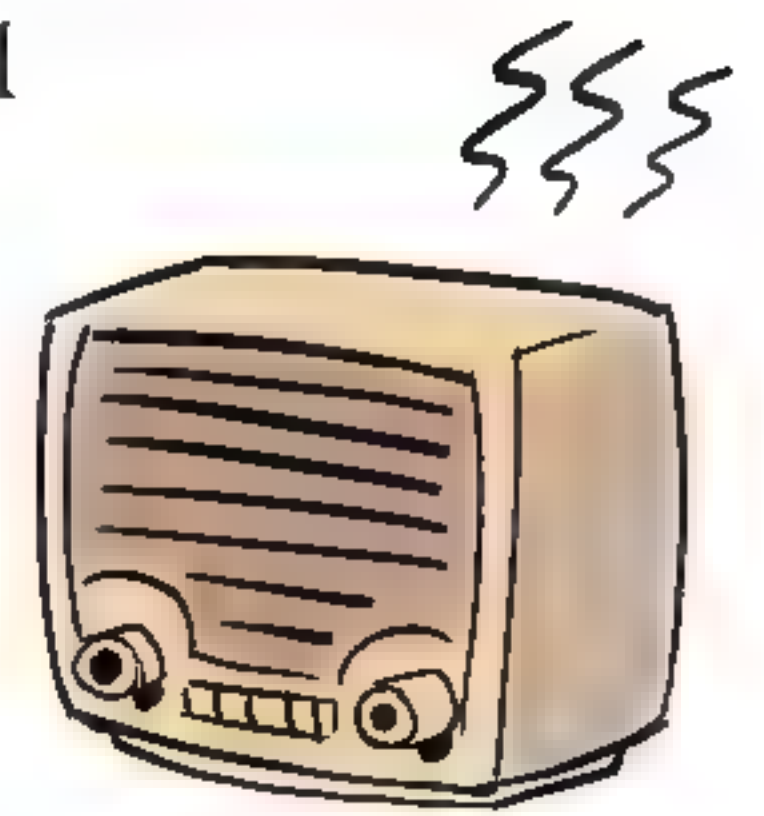
The U.S. drops nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. Hundreds of thousands are killed, and Japan surrenders. World War II comes to an end.

October 24, 1945

The United Nations is formed and its statutes adopted.

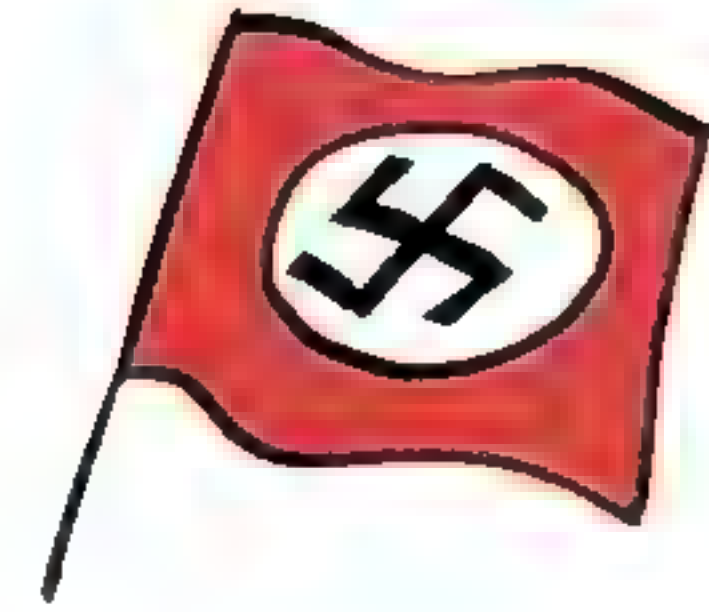
November 20, 1945

An international trial in Nürnberg (Nuremberg) against the German war criminals commences. Other trials follow.





GLOSSARY



Allies: Military alliance during World War II between nations united against Germany, Italy, and Japan. The Allied nations included France, Poland, the United Kingdom, and later the Soviet Union, the United States, and China.

Antisemitism: Prejudices and hostility against Jewish people.

Concentration camps: Camps where prisoners were forced to labor and kept locked away, because of their political views, religion, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or criminality.

Crystal Night (Kristallnacht): Persecution of Jews on the nights of November 9-10, 1938. Many Jews were murdered, thousands were arrested, and their homes, businesses, and synagogues were destroyed.

Deport: To expel or forcefully transfer people from one area to another.

Disinfect: To clean material or humans using chemicals so that infectious agents or diseases are not transmitted.

Extermination camps: Camps with the purpose of committing mass murder, primarily through gas chambers. During World War II, the Nazi Germans created six extermination camps in Poland where mostly Jews, but also Romanians and other groups, were murdered.

Gas chamber: Rooms in some extermination camps where the Nazis committed mass murder using exhaust from cars or poisoned gas.

Ghetto: During World War II, ghettos were used for creating isolated and restricted living areas for Jews. Romanians were also sometimes placed there.

Hitler, Adolf (1889-1945):

Leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party and political leader of Germany from 1934-1945.

Holocaust: The Nazi genocide of Jews, Romanians, the disabled, and dissidents.

March of Death: Marches that prisoners were forced to walk as the SS emptied all concentration camps, because the Allies were closing in on them in 1945. A large number of the prisoners died from starvation, exhaustion, or were shot to death.

Mengele, Josef (1911-1979):

Chief Doctor in the concentration camp in Auschwitz. He performed reckless experiments on the prisoners, and selected which Jews would go straight to the gas chambers when arriving to Auschwitz.

National Socialist German Workers Party:

German Political Party from 1920 to 1945. Also called the Nazi Party. A German political movement with an anti-democratic ideology. The Nazis wanted to create a German fellowship that did not include Jews, Romanians, homosexuals, dissidents, or disabled people.

Occupation: When one country takes over a place or a group of people in another country by force.

Rationing cards/tickets:

Coupons to buy things like food when supplies grow scarce during war.

SS: The Schutzstaffel, or Protection Squad, a Nazi military organization in Germany during the years of 1925-1945. They started off as body guards for Adolf Hitler, but quickly expanded their

power, promoting the Nazi ideology and supervising the extermination of the Jews.

Star of David: Jewish symbol, a six-pointed star. From 1935 and onwards, Nazis forced Jews to wear a yellow star of David on their clothes.

Surrender: To give up in a conflict.

Swastika: Symbol for the National Socialist German Workers Party; in 1933, it became the official symbol of the German realms.

Synagogue: Jewish congregation hall for services.

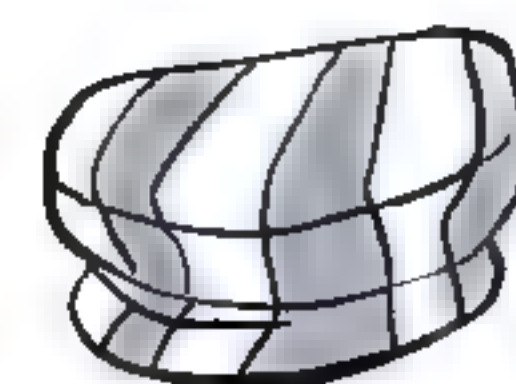
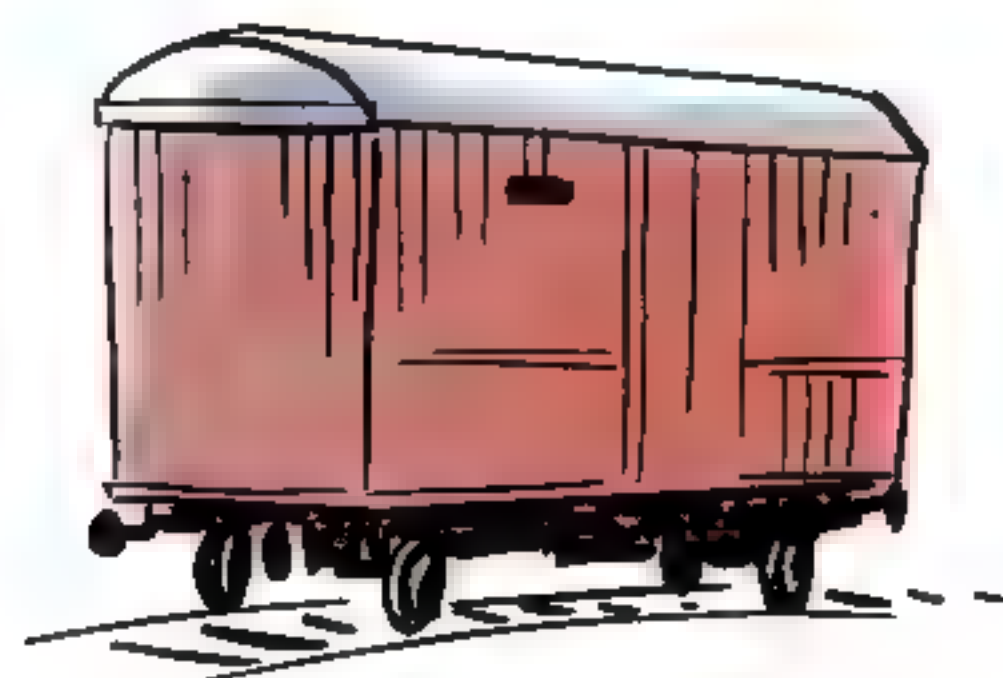
Tuberculosis: Disease in which the lungs are attacked by bacteria; curable with penicillin and other medical treatment.

Typhus: A common disease during World War II among soldiers and in ghettos and in camps. Deadly if not treated.

United Nations (UN): Created by the Allies as World War II ended, founded to work for international peace. Almost every country in the world now has members in the UN.

White busses: A mission by the Red Cross to transport survivors of camps at the end of the war, to Sweden and other places.

Yiddish: Language spoken by the majority of Jews in central and eastern Europe before World War II.



DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?

This book is inspired by *Survivors of the Holocaust* by Kate Schackelton, Zane Whittingham, and Ryan Jones, published by The Watts Publishing group.

Some of the information in this book is taken from Living History Forum and the Swedish Antisemitism Committee. Visit their home pages to learn more:


www.levandehistoria.se
www.skma.se

And in the United States:
<https://abouttholocaust.org/about/>





SPECIAL THANKS



Tobias Rawet
Livia Fränkel
Selma Bengtsson
Susanna Christensen
Emerich Roth
Elisabeth Masur

For having the strength to tell those of us who were not there about your experiences, so that we can tell it to the generations that come after us.

Thank you to the Swedish Committee Against Antisemitism, the Living History Forum, the Association of Holocaust Survivors in Sweden, and the Order of the Teaspoon, for your missions to inform, educate, and explore with future generations how they can make better decisions, be brave, and make the world a better place.

Thank you, Jonna Wolff.

Thank you, Suzanne Kaplan.

Thank you, Ingrid Lomfors.

Thank you, Marie, for giving me this opportunity, and to Peter, for giving these stories life.



Thank you, Kerstin, for making this understandable.

—JBB





To Scott Allie for making me a better artist.
Without your feedback over the years this book simply
wouldn't have been possible.



To all the folks at Dark Horse Comics
for crafting this edition. You rock, as always!

To Mike Mignola.
Your style influenced this even more than
our recent collaborations.

To Chris Golden for allowing me to hone
my craft together with a great writer over so many books.



To Katii O'Brien and Jenny Blenk
for the continued heartfelt feedback on my art.

To Marie Augustsson and Jessica Bab Bonde
for picking me as artist for this book.

To our team at Natur och Kultur
who crafted the Swedish edition.

And to all of the survivors,
for allowing me to be a small part of your story.
Your voices will live with me forever.

—PB



Europe during
World War II,
1939 borders



THE STORIES OF SIX CHILDREN WHO WATCHED EUROPE DESCEND INTO TYRANNY

Sweden's most internationally renowned graphic novel.

As right-wing extremism and antisemitism are evoked once again, stories like these are the alarm-bell needed to remind us never to forget the horrors of the Holocaust. *We'll Soon Be Home Again* is based on interviews with six Holocaust survivors, their stories a moving cry for compassion, as each one is stripped of their possessions and lose their loved ones and their dignity, living through their persecutions in the ghetto, the de-humanization and the starvation in the concentration camps, and the industrial-scale mass murder taking place in the extermination camps.

"Trucks drove into the ghetto and took all of the sick people from the hospitals. They went from house to house and took all of the elderly people, everyone unable to work, and all children under ten years old."

"By the end of August 1942, all children under ten were supposed to be handed over."



SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...
THIS MONSTER!"

